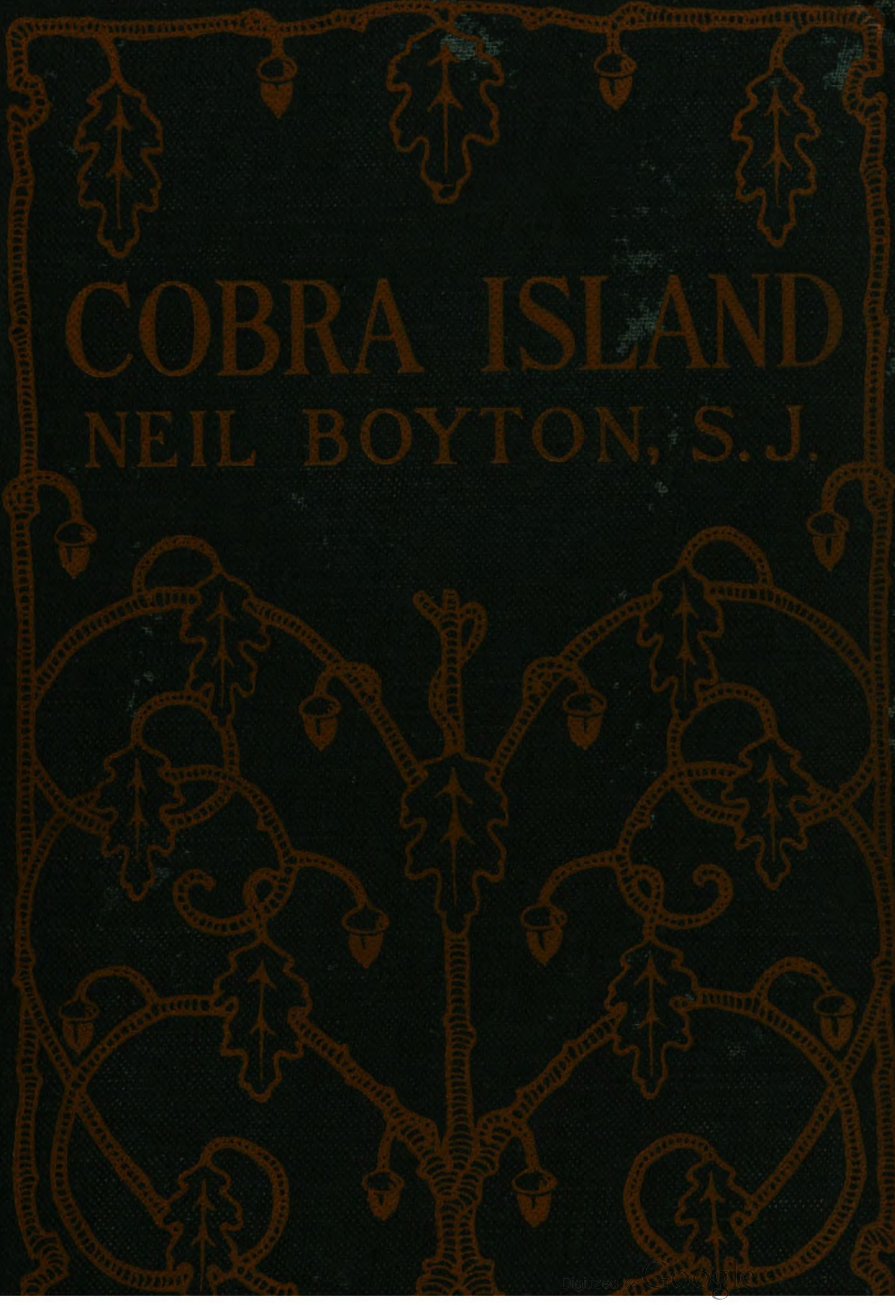

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COBRA ISLAND

NEIL BOYTON, S. J.

G. ^{H.} A.

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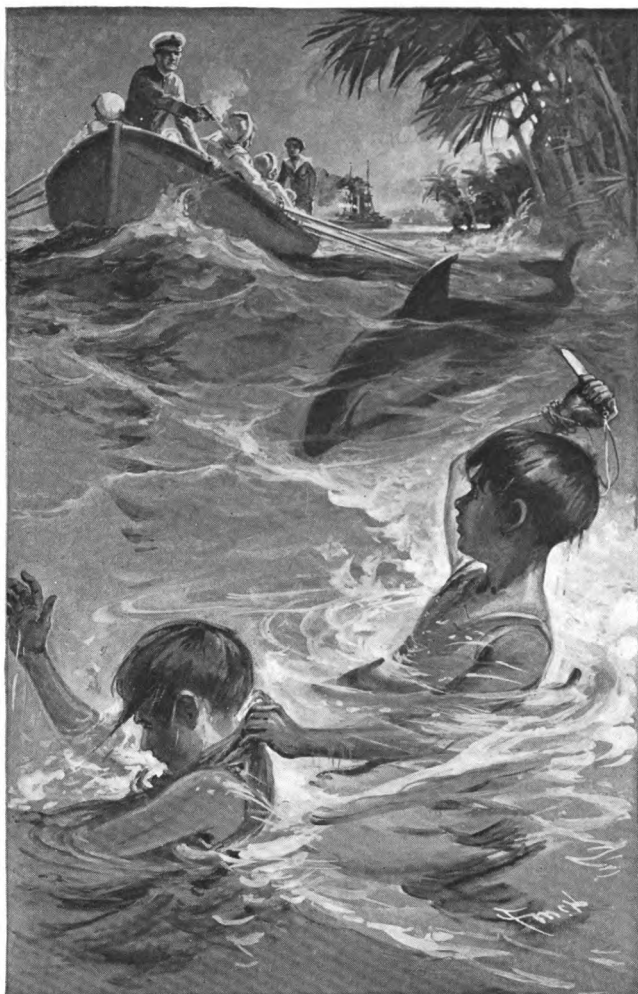


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I slipped the lanyard of my scout-knife over my head and twisted it about my wrist. It's only a two inch blade, but I felt better with that grasped firmly in my right.

Page 156.

COBRA ISLAND

A CATHOLIC SCOUT'S ADVENTURES

BY

NEIL BOYTON, S.J.



NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

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**TO CAPTAIN
MY FATHER**

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. I Need a Rest.....	9
II. I'll Remember Singapore.....	23
III. I Lose Some Sleep.....	37
IV. I Do a Good Turn.....	51
V. I Come Ashore.....	65
VI. I Make Discoveries.....	78
VII. My Fourteenth Birthday.....	92
VIII. I'm Anti-Cobra for Life.....	105
IX. I Take an Anxious Hike.....	118
X. I See a Fight.....	132
XI. I Get Captured Twice.....	146
XII. I Have That Rest.....	161

COBRA ISLAND

CHAPTER I

I NEED A REST

OF COURSE, if I had a visiting card handy, it would read, "Mr. Francis X. Gaze, Jr.", but the truth is, I haven't, and so I had better call myself what most people do, and say my name is Frank, though the fellows usually change that to "Scouty."

My teacher says that middle "X" in my Sunday name—just like in that sickening old algebra—stands for the unknown quantity that is always getting me in trouble. But, of course, he's only joking, for it really stands for the finest saint in Heaven, or—or in any other place. And now that's over!

Another thing! I'll never see fourteen again. I am rather sorry, for, believe me, this has been a half-year! You know, it's funny to have happen to you the things you pay to see in the movies, or read in good, decent books. But the funniest thing was, Dad took me with him, 'cause our doctor said I was getting too nervous and needed a long rest. A rest! That was about the only thing, except dying personally, I didn't have happen to me.

There is one of the twelve Apostles who somewhere in the Bible adds up all the things that happened to him in the course of his wanderings. He was shipwrecked and marooned and knew hunger and, oh! had a whole movie of adventures, when he went about starting up our Catholic Church. Well, I don't mean to be er-r-immoral, 'cause I always like St. Paul, but I'll bet you my good scout-knife against a weed in your war garden, I went through just as much trouble and water as he did—and then some more. You will, too, if you will only just listen.

You see, Dad is General Manager of the Cosmos—that's Greek or something, and means "all over the whole world"—of the Cosmos Film Corporation, and he had to start up branches for our film in India, for the war was closing somewhat our European market, and, anyway, Dad says the East is the coming field for the C. F. C., as the natives out there are just about crazy over American films. Well, that shows they have some sense.

Just about that time Doctor Oakes—who has white hair dripping down his cheeks, and is always recalling that he met me when I first arrived on this immortal coil—advised that rest cure and change of scenery for "yours most agreeably."

Dad and Mother and Doc cooked the whole business up privately, and the first I knew I

wasn't to be juggled at the Prep any more this year, was one dinner, when I learnt Dad had bought two first-class tickets for Bombay, India—and the other one was for me!

I didn't completely lose my appetite, 'cause I had been playing basketball since school let out, but all the same I didn't take much interest in the remainder of that dinner, and we had apple dumpling and hard sauce, and if you know the faintest thing about me, you know my sentiments towards that dessert.

We had a song then that goes something about "Down in Bom Bom Bay" and "every monkey has nine lives." 'Member, you used to whistle it? So from that, I had a hazy notion Bombay's chief exports were monkeys and tigers for zoos, but as for India or Asia—don't ask me personally!

Surely, I had studied geography—and got a prize for it, too!—and once, when I was little, I could bound Asia. How's it go? On the north by the Arctic Ocean and the North Pole. On the east by the Pacific—that's always safe. On the west by Asia Minor, or Africa, and on the south by the, by the—oh! some foreign land or mountain or water range. But that night, when Mother told me, I couldn't have said whether Bombay was an island or a new battle banging away in France.

That was our regular meeting night, and when I told Father Tumulty, my scout-master,

that I wouldn't be able to take my First Class Tests in May, he said they'd wait till I came back, and be all the easier. He was dead right. He's a priest and holy as the deuce, and I wonder if he knew what was coming to me?

But when I told the fellows at the Prep, they told me right off what they thought I was.

Father Hungerford, who was Prefect of Discipline, and strict as anything, said: "Scouty, I feel ten years younger at the news, and what *will* become of jug"—that's that kept-in-class after class—"when you seek a place in the sun?" He meant when I went off to India.

My teacher in First High, Mr. Gilbreth, thought the rest would do him good and asked me to promise not to take any study books along. He was smiling, but he talked like he was serious, so I assured him: "Mister, you bet no Latin or Fundamental English leaves the country with me, unless they follow me by parcel post."

Well, for about a week Ma and I did some shopping along Fulton Street. Shoes and shirts, and new pajamas—blue with tiny little red lines. Two good suits and a traveling cap and a new radium-faced wrist watch, 'cause the last time I was on a slide at Coney something funny must have happened to my good gold one, and it wasn't keeping regular hours since. And ties and stockings. Mother said

she didn't know how I was going to get them darned—she didn't mean the ties—but I said, "Don't you worry. I'll buy new ones in China or Japan." And Dad remarked if the worst came to the worsted I could go without. That's a joke like Dad cracks. He's much better at business. Most do in India. That's why they're always getting snake bites.

Anyway, Pat, our chauffeur, who weighs a heap, had to sit on my steamer trunk to lock it. For Dad said we were not movie stars and so our big baggage was limited to two pieces, and anything else we needed we'd get out of our traveling checks. And Dad had enough with him to feed peanuts to all the loose elephants in Asia.

Well, on the First Friday of March—'course, we all went to Holy Communion at St. Mark's, but I went specially, for it was my ninth First Friday and I'd have rather missed out on the trip than break them—in March, 1916, we left Pennsylvania Station.

Nearly every relative I have in New York—and we have more relatives than rabbits have—and my whole Cobra Patrol, 'cept Mousie Moran, who had the measles and his mother never lets him out at night, anyway—were there in the waiting room. The Cobras gave me a brand new scout-knife and I have it yet, only the point is broken off. But no wonder!

Mother's very last words were, as she blessed

me, same as she did every night since I can remember: "God keep you, my little Scout, and have a good rest, dearie."

Bonus nox! Good night! If she only knew what I was heading into she wouldn't have made a compound sentence out of that parting, for she'd have put a period after the first clause, and gotten a half-nelson on this Second Class Scout that a Broadway cop couldn't have broken.

It was the same old trip across the continent. You know, wake up next morning, pulling into Chicago and its gray skies and drizzling. Then take in a couple of movies, eat and get "The Sunset Limited" in the afternoon, and sleep three nights in the same upper.

Of course, I've been out to the Coast, maybe, five or six times, for there's where all our big stuff is filmed, but I never get tired of those white, receding waves of the Rockies—all still and almighty big and snowy—that, somehow, make you feel how tiny you must look to God.

We sailed out of the Golden Gate for Hong Kong on the more or less good ship *Nagasaki Maru*. She had seen better days, and I had been on worse boats, but, war times, you know.

I must say the water at Waikiki Beach isn't so bad—better than anything down at Coney or Palm Beach—and Yokohama and Shanghai were regular side-shows. Say, honestly, I could stop right here and tell you enough about

Fair Japan and Foul China to keep you reading till breakfast time, only I want to come to where my adventures really start. So we'll censor that part and say that when I was about six weeks older than when I left my home in Sheepshead Bay, Dad and I sailed out of Hong Kong Harbor on the P. & O. steamer *Khandala* for the eighteen days' run to Bombay—as I thought.

Dad had had a Chinese tailor make us white suits in Hong Kong, and I followed Dad's example and got one of those hats that look somewhat like firemen wear. Only I'd never have the nerve to wear it to the Prep. They call 'em solar topees. That doesn't matter, as you surely do need them after you get under the Southern Cross. For it gets hot like—well, I won't mention that place, 'cause I don't intend to ever emigrate there—but like Washington in August, only it stays cooked longer.

The *Khandala* was a small tub, but one of her nice things was the canvas swimming-pool that the lascars rigged up in that forward open place, between the end of the promenade and that 'way up forward deck, where they keep the anchors and all those coiled down, greasy chains, and it's messy as the deuce on white clothes.

The second afternoon after we left Hong Kong, with the high hills of China, big, brown slopes, to starboard, was regular swimming

weather, and I could hardly wait till the pool was full. I remember I kept looking 'way down the black side of the *Khandala* at the smooth South China Sea slipping by, and wishing the boat might break something so as I could try a header into it.

There were three or four real junks with queer, silk sails, sailing between us and the mainland, and I had heard tell in the Smoking Saloon they were pirates and I was half hoping they'd start something.

Dad was talking to a fat man with pinkish socks in the next steamer chair, about the attack on Verdun and wondering if the French could hold, and he yelled over to me: "Look out, son, or you'll topple in." So I came away and started to look for fun.

As I passed the cabin door, out came a boy about my size and height. Blue eyes and hair like gold, but not too sissy looking. I had heard his mother call him Ivan at table and I knew from the passenger list his last name was Williams. He hadn't met me as yet to speak to. You know how icy those English are at first. They don't mean it. It's just a fault of their nationality or something.

He had his swimming-suit and bath-robe on and he thawed and looked at me like, "Why don't you do the same, old thing?" That kind of a glance.

That was enough invitation, for I knew the

pool forward must be open for business, so I dived down the companion and bumped into an iodine-skinned steward with a tea-tray. He said something fast, and though it was in a foreign tongue, Hindustani or Portuguese, I understood and kept right on my way.

Back on deck, I found about five men and that English boy, Ivan Williams, using that pool.

Jiminy! That first dive was good and I turned over and came up, face up, like seals do. I could see 'way up the yellow mast and the black wires of the wireless, and up beyond to where the mast's tip seemed to scrape the solid blue sky. Then I bumped suddenly into a man, or something, and he said: "Pretty good, hey, son!" I knew he was an American all right. It's a funny thing. Out there in Asia, when you meet another Yank, you get friendly mighty soon; even though he does hail from California or Kansas or Louisiana, and you live in little old Brooklyn.

So he and I started fooling in the pool, and everything would have been lovely and my adventures wouldn't have started till the next chapter, if only we had done those stunts in the pool. But Mr. Lee—for that was the name another man called him, only he said "Lee"—but Mr. Lee dared me to dive from the rail into the pool. Of course, that was easy, only ten feet and the water was deep

enough. I make sure of that—the depth of the water—ever since that day at Steeplechase Baths, down at Coney, when I got foolish and somebody brought me home in a taxi and Doctor Oakes had to pick bits of the “stern and rockbound” cement bottom of the Baths out of my cheeks for two weeks after. There’s a mark on my nose even yet. Sis called it my identification mark, but she shouldn’t boast about noses, ’cause—Oh! let it go.

Well, some of the other passengers had come up and were hanging over the rails, watching the free show and, I bet a million dollars, wishing they were in the water. For the sun was not loafing on his job.

So with them looking on, I climbed out to the side of the boat and dove from there into the pool. It was a cinch, and, I guess, I was feeling frisky, for as soon as I came up, I started to repeat the performance. I went up the wet steps and out on to the very edge of the boat. On one side was the canvas bottom of the pool and on the other, maybe, forty feet down, was the whole China Sea, looking bluer and almost calling a chap. But I resisted that temptation.

Then, just as I poised to dive into the pool, the siren of the *Khandala* roared at a junk that was trying to cut across ahead of us.

I told you before, our Doctor said I’m too nervous, for I must have jumped, and the next

I knew I was falling, falling, and seeing bits of blue sky and black side of the vessel, and water rising rapidly. And I wasn't falling into the deck pool either!

There must be something catlike about me. You know, n'matter how close to the floor you hold a kitten upside down, and drop her, she manages to twist right in a fraction of a second and land properly on her four paws. Why! I held our Trixie once—but that was another time. So I must have unconsciously turned right in the air, for I was going head first, hands out, when I met the South China Sea.

It was a deep dive too. Perhaps, the very deepest Scout Gaze ever took, for I was too distracted to turn up, and so I might have kept right on—opposite to what I used to say when I was little—and come right out some place off my home in Sheepshead Bay. Wouldn't Mother and Sis have been surprised!

But, finally, I remember coming up on the same side of the world, without much wind, and the next second something round and white came sailing through the air and hit the water—splash!—within three feet of my ear. Did I crawl in best Australian style to that life-preserver? That's an oratorical question.

The awfully high black side slid by and then the stern of the *Khandala* was just passing, not so far away either. The water churned green and white like in an outdoor swimming-pool,

when it's sunny and they are turning the fresh water into it, and a lot of little undertows pulled me as though they were scraping over me.

I could see passengers leaning far out from the rails and shouting and waving, like I was doing an election bet. Some crazy fool idiot threw another perfectly good life-preserver, that for all I know is floating around yet in that distant sea. That's what I call extravagance!

The waves were higher than I had ever imagined from the deck of the boat, and so, one minute, I would be down in a kind of "Soup Bowl" hollow, like they have at Steeplechase, Coney Island, with that everlasting hot blue sky over me, and the next minute I would be lifted up on the top of a little green glassy mound, like the base of a granite monument, and I could see all around the horizon, same as a periscope, and notice the *Khandala* growing smaller.

After about the time it would take me to eat my third ice cream cone, if I were hungry—only, tough luck! they didn't sell them out there in the China Sea—I saw that the steamer was turning slowly and they were lowering away a boat. The boat was white and stood out distinctly against the dark side.

There was no need of them doing that, for I could have climbed up a rope, if they had

backed and came near enough to give a fellow half a chance. And then, if they had kept on, there was a humpbacked looking island over to the westward, and with the aid of the life-preserver, and an S. O. S. to my Guardian Angel, I could have swum to China dead easy.

I suppose I should have said some prayers while floating around, strap hanging to that life-preserver, but all I did was to squeeze my scapular medal and tell Our Lady she knew I was a member in good standing of her Sodality at the Prep, and that she had better look out for her property.

Then the old white boat came bobbing across the waves like a motor-boat. You would think the sailors were racing, or rowing home to dinner, or something. And the next I knew, my first swim in the South China Sea was over and I was being hauled in by Mr. Bookie, the Second Officer, who said: "There you are, my lad! Don't be scared. The sharks didn't get you this trip."

Sharks! Gee! It surely was a good thing I had never thought about them!

That officer fellow made me drink some whiskey or something, that burnt going down worse than a poker, and made me cough.

I was afraid he was going to start jawing me, but he was nice and he never did. Neither then nor ever.

About everybody on board the *Khandala*,

even the ladies who had gone to bed seasick, were lined up by the upper rails. Below, on the main deck, there were massed hundreds of red and white and green turbans of Hindus and, maybe a thousand John Chinamen in their pajamas. In fact, all the steerage must have quit gambling, and they do not call off fan-tan often in those waters, even for meals.

I felt bashful when they cheered in different speeches, and up on the promenade deck, they were yelling in language a fellow could understand. I heard that boy Ivan's voice above them all. It did not sound a bit British and reserved for once.

Then I began to feel limp and all the strength rushed out of me, like you pulled the plug.

The next I knew I was looking up at the yellow and whitish ceiling of my stateroom, with all those folded up, ready to use, life-preservers above the strips of wood, that always remind you of shipwrecks.

Dad and the ship doctor were looking at me. Doctor Roberts was smiling, but Dad was not, and he said sternly: "Frank, the next time you attempt a stunt like that, you'll take the first steamer back to your mother."

But I was too tired to tell him I had not done it deliberately, so all I did was to turn my face to the cabin wall and sleep. No dreams.

CHAPTER II

I'LL REMEMBER SINGAPORE

THEN came the morning when we turned Asia. You know, just before you come to Singapore, the vessel's heading due south. Then the ship's head swings sharply west and then edges up to the north. And the green continent of Asia that was always to the westward, now, somehow, seems to shift to east.

Well, that's the time every American on board gets that foreign land feeling sharply. Always before, it was only the smiling blue Pacific that stood between you and God's Country. Now you really feel that, besides the ocean, all heathen Asia blocks you off, and you're a little Columbus with the home folks under the horizon astern.

But soon we were sailing between unripe green islands, that would make dandy scout camp sites, if they were only a bit nearer Brooklyn and my Troop. The waters ahead got narrower and narrower, and the free sights got freer and freer.

Three lean Japanese cruisers lay at anchor in the outer harbor, and it was evidently wash day on each of them. A smoky British destroyer dashed by us like a fire engine going

down Broadway. Only it was not going as fast as an American one would.

We steamed slowly, 'cause we were entering the mine field and you never can tell. It's a funny feeling going over a mine field. Just baby blue waves on the surface and round red devils underneath, and suppose—Wow! Purgatory next stop!

A whole brown village on stilts stood over the blue water and as we drew nearer, Ivan Williams and I did not need the glasses to make out brown thatched roofs, and glistening black canoes gliding in and out, and brown children swimming like fish. These last made me feel wave color.

We breasted a high pooped junk with brownish green sails that open like half a fan. Then under our bows shiny flying fish would rise like scared hydroaeroplanes and disappear into the swimmy-looking water. And once a shark the size of a young submarine came nosing up looking for white meat, and all the other fish, that follow a boat to get a free meal, decided they were not hungry.

Then we had to line up for quarantine, and passport inspection in the Smoking Saloon. That's just tiresome. As if I'd want to import some contagious disease, or, if I was, as Ivan says, "a bloomin' spy."

A couple of hours later Dad and I 'rikisha-ed to the American Consul's and Dad discovered

he and Consul Daly had the same Alma Mater—that's Latin for "your college," though I don't see how they get it out of those words—only looking at Mr. Daly, I'd say he must have been in the lower kindergarten when my Dad graduated from Holy Cross.

Anyway, I saw they did not really need me. I asked Dad and he said I might cruise about sightseeing Singapore, and to be sure to show up at the G. O. Hotel in time for tiffin, as we had to be on board the *Khandala* before she sailed at four in the afternoon.

I said: "Yes, sir," and never knew what was ahead of me before I would see Daddy again.

That's the whole trouble, if I only had a kind of a periscope and could shoot it up and see a couple of hours ahead, I'd go the other way most of the time—but not always.

Well, downstairs I found the same coolie who had brought us from the hotel. He smiled and came running up with his 'rikisha. You know, over in Asia, they have men-horses and they pull you about in big kinds of go-carts. I don't know, but I prefer a flivver. But that's trivial.

I signaled for him to go. He picked up the shafts and off he trotted. We crossed a canal, thick with sampans, and as we came bowling by the Grand Oriental Hotel, some one called: "Gaze! I say, Frank Gaze!"

I "whoa-ed" to my horse and it did not take

Ivan—for it was young Williams who had called—a century to get permission from his Mater to join up with me.

We stopped to buy some postals and a tin of chocolates at a Jap store. So I paid our he-horsie and let him go.

Then we decided we would ride in style and I signaled one of those gharris. You know, they are a kind of a low down enclosed pony carriage and the gharri-wallah—that's their lingo for coachman—sits in front on a sort of piano stool.

Well, we two squeezed inside and dropped the window shutters and I showed the driver in finger-ese we would tell him at the head of the streets, what streets to turn down. So we trotted, and, believe me, sights opened on all sides.

You would never fall asleep in a Singapore road. 'Rikishas went sailing by with cool young Chinks in them. They were schoolboys, all right, for they had satchels and slates, but imagine, going to school in white and blue pajamas! I'd go to Sing Sing first!

And the street-cleaners! Bronzed White Wings, got up in a purple rag with a metal number strapped to their biceps. And big Sikh cops—important and khaki-turbaned, with a Marcel wave to their black beards. And coolies working by the roadside, who could easily have passed their physical examination

right there and then. And more toddling chocolate kiddies than you would see at a fire on the East Side, and these wore clothes cut on the model of an umpire's chest protector.

We crossed another bridge that looks like the old State Street Bridge across the Chicago River, and, afterwards we turned into a broad boulevard that had those big ostrich-egg-looking lamps in rows. I think it's called the Esplanade, but Riverside Drive would be more appropriate.

We could see the blue sea and tall shipping—some in crazy camouflage—and, across the water, that looked as calm as Sunday morning, those grand scout camp islands.

In gold letters over a—I guess you would call it a jewelry shop—I saw the sign, "Kim & Co." and that right away made me feel like I was closing in on India, for I like that story of Mr. Kipling every bit as much as I like "Treasure Island", that a man named—it begins with S— wrote.

A funny thing. In Kim & Co.'s windows they displayed American watches. The kind they made in Connecticut and go all over the world. I told that to Ivan, but he asked, "Where's Connecticut?" and then I quit. He knows where Yorktown is now, anyway.

Well, after we had seen about eighty-seven million natives, I thought it was about time

to eat again, and I think Ivan did too, for he said, "What time is tiffin?" That's only another name for lunch, only you get less to eat.

I looked at my wrist watch and I saw we had been joy-riding for over an hour and a half, and, right there, remembering New York taxis and what they charge you, I reached into my pocket and—oh! I struck bottom! Not a red cent!

Ivan asked, "What's wrong, young Gaze?" and I demanded: "Got any money?" He said, "Why, I forgot to bring any, except what I spent for postals and this tin of sweets. You know, old chap, you said it would be all right."

That McGinty feeling! Here we owed this brown-skinned skinflint up aloft for going on two hours, and he knew we were foreigners and would make us pay accordingly.

I saw we had to act quickly. I knew the license number of the gharri, 'cause a scout is observant, and, anyway, it was easy to remember "1234". I took one of those Singapore postals and wrote a letter to the American Consul, asking him for Dad's sake to pay the bearer for two hour's joy-ride and no more.

I knew Dad would square accounts with Mr. Daly later, but in the meantime I was not going to land in any foreign police station, with the *Khandala* sailing for another foreign country at 4 P. M.

Ivan was just scared white and he looked

to me to—er-r—extract us. That means to get us out. I know, 'cause once Mr. Gilbreth, my teacher at the Prep, made me write it two hundred times. In ink too!

So I signaled the fellow aloft to head down a quiet, treey-looking road that we had come to, and to go slow. We dropped into a regular funeral pace.

Stone compound walls, with bunchy trees over the tops of them were on either side, and not a soul was in sight. I did not feel lonesome over that fact. Nor did Ivan look it.

I saw ahead a still-looking bungalow in a flowery garden with a big traveler palm towering over it. That's that tall tree that looks like a fan that's been left out in a hurricane.

I said to Ivan: "We're going calling there. Don't make a sound, lest our taxi driver objects. You drop out that side and I will go this."

Then I fastened that postal to the seat and just before we breasted the gate of the bungalow, we opened the low doors either side of the gharri and out we tiptoed. The gharri went on.

It did not take either of us half an hour to whisk inside the gate. A little gilt sign there stated, "Major Percy Ramsey-Smith, R. A. M. C." But, what was better, not a native in sight. All kinds of hothouse flowers grew by the paths and there were big, pink seashells

about. I did not know just what I was going to say, but I decided to see Major Doctor and ask him for enough money to get back to the Grand Oriental Hotel and Dad's purse.

So Ivan and I—Ivan following—stalked up to the veranda like we did not want to crush the walk. You know, all those houses out in the East are just full of servants, and, naturally, I expected to meet a 3.5% dressed gardener or butler or doorkeeper, or something. But you would think the circus was showing on the other side of the town and all the help had free passes, judging from the sounds that came from that big house.

On the veranda were several steamer chairs and a discarded *London Times* and the ashes of smokes. I could not see any bell and just then, out in the road, I heard that gharri coming back fast and the gharri fellow on top talking faster.

That was enough. We blew right indoors, like leaves in autumn.

It was cool and half dark and stiller than an attic in summer in the big hallway. Dead ahead loomed a grinning red and gold idol, looking straight at me. I crossed myself before I realized that I had done it. Ivan did not know how to bless himself, so he edged into me and grabbed my arm, saying, "It's jolly creepy."

Then he whispered: "What's that, Frank

Gaze!" And he pointed to the deep shadows by the wall. I squinted, and thought it was a cat idol. Then it moved slightly and I jumped, too, but I guess Ivan rose higher from the floor than I did.

There was a sound of a chain being dragged across the stone floor, just like Marley's ghost did, and as the thing came into the dim light, I knelt and said: "Puss. Puss. Puss. Pretty kitty." And I saw it was better than any old tom-cat.

It was a darling little monkey and the chain was broken off at the end. Monkeys can't throw any scare into me, and I saw right off it was not used to boys, for it continued to come closer. That's a sure sign.

It was a little eight inch high monk, and I felt better. If Mr. Hyphen-Smith was out, his pet was doing the honors. And right then I decided to offer to buy it, if the Major would let it go.

Then I touched it on the shoulder and my hand was wet and dark stained.

"Paint!" I exclaimed, "Ha-ha, Jakko. Somebody is going to bed to-night without his supper."

Ivan grabbed the end of the chain.

Then he dropped it and looked at his hand in the light and then he began to scream: "That's not paint, you blighted ass. That's—I say, man, look!"

I forgot all about the price of baby monkey pets and I thought surely some one would come running, for Ivan was not exactly whispering. But not a sound in that whole bungalow, only a lizard scratching up the wall, which did not help any.

Then there seemed to come a low moan from the next room, and I had to push Ivan off.

Now Dad always said the best way to get over a scare is to go to it, and Father Tumulty, my scout-master, taught the same on hikes. So again I blessed myself. This time knowingly, and I took Ivan's hand, and we headed for that deadly quiet next room. The little monk dragged his chain behind us.

It was a corner one, that room, and the sunlight was coming in through a strip bamboo curtain, making great yellow bars across the floor.

There was a disordered table there with glasses and bottles and scattered cards and cigarette butts. A telephone rested on a stand and plenty of wickerwork chairs stood about. But half under and half out from under the table lay a big man in khaki. Part of a blue service revolver showed by his right hand.

Then that man moaned again, weakly.

The little pet monkey loped over, dragging his chain and it jumped up on the man's shoulder. I noticed a gold crown there—that's the

insignia of a British major—and I did not need to use any of my scout knowledge to find out the right answer.

Then while Ivan and I grew there, the 'phone bell whirred and Ivan cried out like I had stuck a pin in him.

But I wanted to see bottom in this mystery, so I walked, picking my steps, across the stone floor, and took up the receiver. Ivan stuck right at my elbow.

At once a voice shot Malay or something, not United States, at me, and I said in a deep voice, "Speak English. Hello, what is it, please? No savvy. English speak."

Then came more and rapider native talk and as I held the receiver to my ear, my eyes fell on a single slip of paper that had been deliberately placed under the 'phone on the stand.

The writing was large, but readable, and I read rapidly:

CAPTAIN WILLIAM CORNWALL, R.A.M.C.

Sir:

I cannot honor that note I gave you last night. I trust you will see your way not to present it at my banker's.

Of course, if you insist, Alice will lose this piece of property, and I ask you, for the honor of The Corps, not to turn her out penniless.

It was signed with Major Smith's full name. Then in my ear came a European voice,

"Hello, Major? I say, old top, this is Cornwall, you know."

I had to do some quick thinking, but baseball helped me there. And I think I did.

So in the same deep voice, I called: "Captain Cornwall?"

"Yes; who the devil is this, please?" The voice changed at once.

"Never mind who this is, but let me tell you something, Captain. You cut out cards and destroy that note given you last night. Do you understand me?"

"To whom have I the honor of speaking?" You could feel the Arctic breeze over the wire. It's a wonder I did not get triple pneumonia!

"No friend of yours, you darn old card sharp. Do you hear what I say? Tear up that note, or Ill, I'll haunt you. Au revoir."

There came a sputtering over the 'phone, like somebody was imitating opening a siphon bottle, and I hung up the receiver.

I was mad clean through, and I guess Ivan thought I really was, the way he looked at me. But I did not care.

I grabbed up the receiver again and when Central answered, I said: "Please give me the Police Station or the Bobbies' Barracks, or whatever you call the cops. Police wanted at once. It's important."

Almost next second, I heard, "Inspector Brown. Well?"

Then I explained: "Say, Sergeant, this is Major Smith's bungalow." I looked at the note and read off his full name and address. "And there's been some dirty work done here. Ask Captain —" My eyes fell to the paper again. "Ask Captain William Cornwall, R.A.M.C., about the case. Come at once, please. Police wanted." And I hung up.

I did not have to urge Ivan Williams to follow me out of that wrecked home. Even the gharri-wallah, who was longing to meet two foreign devil boys, was more welcome to us than the bloody monkey and the scarcely breathing body under the table.

Once in the road, Ivan had a real idea. "Say, look! We can take a carriage and get the tin at the hotel from my Mater to pay for its hire."

I had never thought of that, and I, a Second Class scout too! I wished to the deuce Ivan had had that thought before we bumped into that Major Doctor.

So we walked to the corner and hailed an empty gharri and told the Mohammedan atop to take us "chop chop" to the G. O. Hotel.

Neither Ivan nor I cared for more Singapore sights. I thought I was going to faint again and I was sure Ivan would. Only he did not.

But we decided the best thing was to say

nothing of our visit to that bungalow for the present.

Dad was just beginning to worry when we drove up, and he did, when I said I did not care for any lunch.

My appetite came back with a vengeance at dinner, and that night, sitting out on deck, and the *Khandala* already in the Straits of Malacca, I began to wonder what Captain Cornwall must be thinking about, and if the Police Inspector had found out yet who 'phoned him. Then came the vision of that breathing body, half under the table, and I got out my beads and said them for Major Percy Ramsey-Smith, R.A.M.C.—an officer and a coward. Maybe, he did not know what he was doing though.

CHAPTER III

I LOSE SOME SLEEP

SOME new boys had come on board the *Khandala* at Singapore; mostly babies, but there was one of them, a merry brown-skinned lad, not as tall as I am. He looked somewhat like Mousie Moran, with whom I pal back in Brooklyn, only better looking. His name was different though. It was Visitatio Harriel De Souza, and he was on his way back to St. Mary's High School at Bombay.

We soon became acquainted after a couple of games of deck quoits, and late next afternoon we were sitting in deck chairs side by side, eating chocolates out of a tin. They were Visitatio's chocolates, 'cause I had clean forgotten to buy a supply in Singapore. That ought to show you how upset I was in that town.

The low white buildings of a port appeared on the Malay Peninsula. Visitatio knew all about that tired looking city, for he said it was Malacca and he had lived there with his folks. And once St. Francis Xavier, my special patron after whom I'm named, had cursed it.

I did not believe St. Francis ever swore and I was going to wade into him for simony, or

whatever you call speaking against a saint's character, but Visitatio explained he did not mean it at all in that way. That it happened back before he was born, in the sixteenth century. The Portuguese people, who lived there in those days, were kind of gay. You know, they were good Catholics when they were baptized and then they forgot the fact till about the time they were due to die, when they wanted to be certified as good Catholics right suddenly. You know, there are a lot of folks that way even to-day. I had an uncle once, but I'll tell that some other time.

Anyway, after St. Francis had preached there a while, he took off his moccasins—or whatever he called 'em—and he told those people he was shaking the dust of their city for ever, and that as soon as he sailed away, all their shipping and trade would leave Malacca and their port would not exactly die, but become a two-train-a-day town. And that's one curse I've seen working.

Well, after we had shown bottom in that tin of chocolates, Visitatio fell asleep in his deck chair and I went looking for Ivan Williams and a drink of water.

There was a cooler in the Smoking Saloon and there I found Dad, smoking and talking earnestly to several gentlemen in white and khaki.

Just as I came up behind his chair I heard

one of the men—an officer, whom they called “Colonel Dick”—say: “We’re lucky if the beggar doesn’t get us yet.”

Then they noticed me and stopped suddenly. Dad winked at me to go away.

Later, when we were dressing in our state-room for dinner, Dad told me the big news confidentially. It seems the Captain had received an Admiralty radio, warning him there was an enemy raider that had slipped out of one of the Sumatra ports, loose in the waters ahead of the *Khandala*. She had gotten a B. I. tramp steamer last night.

Now, before leaving God’s Country, I had followed the *Emden* and all my money was on her until the *Sidney* got her. But hearing that information from Dad and knowing we were sailing on a British boat and a raider was not any thousand of miles away, was anything but pleasant. You feel the raider’s it, and, naturally, you do not care to be tagged.

Dad said to keep that news to myself, for it was being passed quietly about to the men, and the women and children were not to be scared. I liked Dad all the more for taking me out of the “into the lifeboat first” class. That’s the kind of a Dad to have; one who trusts you. Good old Dad!

Well, anyway, I finished dressing and made a good Act of Contrition in case anything was due to happen while we were at dinner, ’cause I

was hungry and I did not want to be distracted.

Then I went down when the gong boomed and attacked that meal. Gee! I'd have taken a double set of everything on board, if I had only known it was to be the last Christian feed I was scheduled to have for weeks. But, there again, the future was foggy.

After dinner I walked the deck with Dad and we fell imagining what Mother and Sis were doing at that moment on the other side of the globe. Funny, but we were about just beyond half way around and every knot the old *Khandala* steamed was really bringing us nearer New York City.

I guessed Mother was reading our letters, posted at Honolulu, and telling of our trip up the Pali and through the Aquarium and the heavenly swim we had had at Waikiki Beach. And Sis was—well, Dad reckoned she was telephoning Marion, who belongs to the same frat, or whatever girls call it, as she did at St. Elizabeth's, and Mother could hear her saying, "Guess whom I saw to-day?" and "Lovely!" and "Do tell!" If you have any sisters in your household, you know the 'phone conversations they have in *sæcula sæculorum*.

Then we sat in our deck chairs and watched the night. Take it from me, folks, that was a night! There was no moon, only great stars, big as diamonds that prize-fighters and limousine ladies wear. The Southern Cross hung

slantways across the Equator and my old friend, the Dipper, had completely disappeared. The water was black velvet, 'cept where the starlight danced, and the wheezy *Khandala* just swish-swashed her black bulk through it all. It would have been a lalapazuza night for a swim.

Finally, I saw Dad was half asleep and I tired of yawning, so I kissed him good night, and I gave him a good one too, for he was the best Dad ever.

Then I went below. The stewards had all the lights in the saloons and passageways shaded with blue coated globes—they had only done that since leaving Singapore—and that gave a sort of a "This way to the murder, please" gleam.

Oh! It was cheerful as jug below and you felt like you could live in Arkansas forever, if you only were there.

But it was worse than that in our stateroom. The boy had lately closed and blocked the ports with thick paper and I discovered the electrics were cut off. I rang for the boy and he told me Captain's orders. Then he showed me a couple of inches of candles standing by that trick washstand they have in staterooms.

But it was too stuffy to light that, so I skinned out of my clothes in the half dark, screwed open the port and fixed that sugar shovel arrangement in the opening that is in-

tended to coax any stray breeze to enter. It did too and I had no more than said my short form of night prayers, when I was asleep.

It was a funny dream I had. Here I was really somewhere out of the Straits of Malacca and off the tip of Sumatra and getting well into the Indian Ocean, and I got dreaming of 'way off Coney Island and Shooting the Chutes that is down in Luna Park.

I was a Chute boatman in a blue sailor suit and I was just at the top of the Chutes looking down on the lake and the big colored electric light stuck tower and the white towers on all the amusement buildings. Mother and Dad were in one seat of my Chute boat and Sis and that Johnnie McIntyre of hers were seated in the front seat. Then the cradle was tipped and we ripped and rumbled down the long incline. Just as we were to leave the Chutes and before we hit the lake, Sis was screaming.

Then I felt a horrible crash and I thought we had jumped the track or something. I sat up in berth, sleepily, cracking my head on the ceiling.

There came another thunder crash and the sound of some one running wildly on the deck overhead.

I forgot my dream of Shooting the Chutes in Luna Park on the other side of the world and jumped out of that upper in fire engine order.

It was pitch dark and I suddenly missed the throbbing of the *Khandala's* engines.

Then on the night roared a siren. One. Two. Three. Four. Five. Deep, like the whistle had a cold, and the noise penetrated every part of the boat.

I woke wide awake after I heard that signal to take to the lifeboats. And I knew it was no drill they were staging at that wee hour of the night. It felt after midnight and a glance at the radium face of my wrist watch showed it was ten minutes to eleven.

Father Tumulty, my scout-master, always told us to keep cool in summer and trouble, and when anything happened a scout's place was to help the authorities. I did not have any trouble staying cool and I began thinking what practical good turns I could do while I pulled on my clothes and dived into my low shoes. I never in my life dressed for school as fast as I did that night, and that's a fact.

Groping into the passageway instantly I discovered one good turn, for I hit into a large bulk of a man and he was cursing and feeling for the stairway. I told him to drop the profanity and follow me, and he did both; one huge trembling paw on my shoulder.

We came out the companion and the deck was a lovely sight. It was tilting already. There was an unnatural flicker forward and a glance

showed the bridge and the Captain's cabin underneath beginning to burn brightly.

A man at my side was saying over and over again to nobody in particular: "They got the wireless first shot."

Then an officer came yelling: "Get to your assigned boats at once."

I knew the boat I had been assigned to at boat drill was No. 6, which was aft on the port side. I was then forward on the starboard and so I started to work back.

Then I remembered I had left my good scout-knife on the sofa berth and that it might be useful, so I doubled back down the companion and up came a squalling baby and two ladies who certainly had hysterics or something. Racket! I turned guide and showed them the way to the deck, where a steward took them.

I started back down the companion and up the empty black and velvet passageway. It was listing heavily and I had almost to walk on the side wall like a fly. I had to count the stateroom doors and bark my shins on sills before I found my number.

It did not take me half a century to reach and grab my scout-knife off the sofa berth. And I rescued my O. D. slip-on too, 'cause Sis had given it to me in leaving and I thought she might not like it if I left it behind. You

know, sisters think an awful lot about their knitted gifts to you.

Then I suddenly remembered an—er—antidote Ivan Williams had told me of a fire in his bungalow one night in Hong Kong, when the engines came clanging and his father had yelled at him and woke him up and he had crawled back into bed and the firemen had to go through some movie stuff getting him out. So I thought I would look him up for safety.

I felt my way to Ivan's stateroom. I knew it! Ivan was dead to the world in his little upper and it was a good thing it had an iron rail; otherwise, he would have spilled out long ago.

He mumbled: "Mama, I don't want to get up yet." I shook him and told him: "Son, you don't come now, you'll stay and I'll be praying for you."

Then he was fully awake and he exclaimed: "Frank Gaze! Is it you? I say, man, what's wrong with the blooming berth?"

Well, when I got him topside, the deck was already deserted. We could hear the lines creaking as the last lifeboat was being lowered. The deck too was trying hard to give a good imitation of the side of a hill. The pilot house was blazing fiercely now and along the deck was a pretty mess. It was all confusion; life-belts dropped, ropes lying like dead snakes,

deck chairs smashed, an abandoned suitcase gaping open, and enough clothes dropped promiscuously to set up a St. Vincent de Paul Society for the winter.

Along this deck came four lascars and they were carrying a heavy man. He, the large man, was groaning and I saw in the bright light that it was Captain Tyne and the right shoulder of his white dinner coat was all messy.

Ivan edged into me, just like he had done in that Singapore bungalow, when the little monkey moved—remember?—and I saw I had to brace him. It's a funny thing! I did not feel exactly like eating ice cream myself, but the sight of Ivan and his terror made me remember I was a scout. So I told him, speaking his English: "Lad, don't be a beastly little funk. We'll follow those lascars, carrying the captain, and we'll jolly soon find one lifeboat left."

Along the deck aft we went and there was No. 8 lifeboat swung out on her davits, and a voice, that I recognized as Visitatio's, yelled out from it: "That you, Scouty Gaze? I'm jolly glad."

There was Mr. Bookie, the Second Officer, who had picked me up that time in the South China Sea, and we had been friends ever since.

He had an ammunition belt buckled over his white uniform and an automatic on his hip. He looked swell.

As soon as he caught sight of the two of us, he exclaimed sharply in his officer's voice: "I say, what are you two chaps doing here? Why didn't you go with your own lifeboat?"

I started to tell him I had gone back for that knife I wanted, when out of the night, there came a sound like a giant whistling and a shot crashed into the bows of the *Khandala*. Shots make an awful noise at night. The whole boat staggered and the noise was the best Fourth of July celebration I ever remember.

The Second Officer pulled us into the boat roughly. Then the lascars, who had laid the captain still groaning in the stern sheets, began to lower away. It's a jerky sensation, like being in a Ferris Wheel when it isn't working aright.

We swung clear of the black sides of the *Khandala*, past the blacker open port of a stateroom, and in a minute, there was a smack and we had reached the surface.

I put my hand in the water and it was warm enough for a swim, only that was hardly the—er-r—physical moment to take one.

As we rowed off, the *Khandala* looked immense, with dancing shadows in the light of her own blazing. But I had seen her before, looking up—that time I fell overboard—and I was not so impressed.

She was burning forward now like a live

volcano, and already was lighting up the ocean considerably.

Off to the northeast appeared a flash and the next second the *Khandala* was hulled, just aft her forward funnel. It was a bull's-eye shot, just like you read in decent books about the Naval War of 1812 and pirate fights.

But if we had delayed another couple of minutes!

Mr. Bookie said: "We had just received a radio from that raider." He used an adjective that I won't give publicity to, but I do not blame him much. "Got a radio to stand by and not to use our wireless. The old man's answer was to order Sparks to send out an S. O. S., and he must have just sent it, when that lucky hit carried away our wireless and some of the wreckage got him." He motioned towards the unconscious captain.

One of the lascars cried something and pointed to the *Khandala*.

About half a mile away we could see our late floating hotel keeling over visibly. Her two stacks tipped, tipped, till I could almost see, just like from an airplane, their black tops and the white outline of the deck where the smoke and steam would let you. The smashed bridge and forward where they rigged the swimming pool were yellow flames. Then a funny thing happened. There was another flash to the northeast, a screech overhead, and

plump! a direct hit forward. The *Khandala* stopped reeling, her bows disappeared in kindling wood, and the stern appeared to come up out of the seas, like a jack-knife bridge did, that I once watched in St. Louis. I could almost see her two propellers; black blades high in the air.

The smoke scraped the low stars above the horizon. The leaping flames licked up the stern like they were scared to get wet, and, then, like a good diver cutting the water, the *Khandala*, that we had paid good money to take us to Bombay, sunk down tired into the Indian Ocean.

There was a hissing of ten thousand disturbed snakes. A regular Turkish bath cloud of steam, and, like blowing out a match, the glare died out of the sky and it was black, lonely night and we in the middle of it. A bit of deck wreckage blazed up far off like a waste paper basket on fire and then the ocean squelched that. The stars so silent and so far away made it even lonelier.

Then I heard the slap, slap of little waves hitting the gunwale and I noticed the lascars had stopped rowing and were looking for the *Khandala*.

Visitatio was breathing heavily and Ivan suddenly broke the wicked silence by calling out, "I say, where's my Mater?"

I had sense enough to tell him, "She is in

her regular lifeboat. Don't worry." And he seemed comforted.

Then I made a horrifying discovery! For the first time since I woke up, I missed Dad. I had never given him a second's thought all through the movie stuff of the evening. And, gee! I wanted to be near him.

But I figured out he had not come down to bed yet and so he must have been in the Smoking Saloon, playing cards, when that raider made her lucky bull's-eye, crippling the wireless. But the thought struck me. The Smoking Saloon was right aft the bridge. The captain and, maybe, some more had been wounded. What of good old Dad? I was ashamed of not thinking to look for him instead of my old scout-knife, when, maybe, he lay there stunned and needing me badly. And I saw again the after part of the *Khandala* standing up like a rakish mast and slipping down, down into the sea.

I felt near blubbering, only I saw Ivan and Visitatio attending to that, and, somehow, I was an American scout and I could not.

But I did say my most fervent prayer to my Guardian Angel and Daddy's to get on the job and get busy. Then I felt a heap better.

CHAPTER IV

I DO A GOOD TURN

THAT prayer to my Angel was about the best I ever made—no; there was one other time, but that comes later—Anyway, it was a 100% prayer and right after that the thought came how cool Dad always was when excitement arrived. So I figured he was somewhere afloat and safe and praying like anything for me.

But we soon had plenty of reason to forget Who's Who in the other lifeboats. For, about this time one of the lascars, who was rowing mechanically, stopped and began listening. Then he said something in his native lingo to Mr. Bookie.

The Second Officer was holding the Captain's head to ease him and he put him down and half stood up in the boat and peered into the inky east.

Then Ivan Williams shouted: "There's a vessel coming! Don't you hear her?"

Sure enough, 'way off to the eastward, where the stars ended, came a low faint hum, like engines working overtime.

I've heard autos racing in the Sheepshead Bay Speedway and on the beach at Daytona,

and it was like them in the distance, only further off. The four lascars had stopped and but for an occasional slap of a wave and the captain's moans and our breathing, it was stilly still.

After a while the hum was steady and distincter, and once Visitatio De Souza sprang up and said he saw sparks in the west. But none of us saw anything and it was not from not looking either. I guess Visitatio saw those sparks in his imagination. You know, when you are excited, it's easy as the deuce to see more than there is to see. They call that optical collusion, or something.

But all at once, out of the black and starry east there came a flash, like a bit of summer lightning back in God's Country. And while we looked there came the faint boom of an explosion.

Now we could hear the steady roar of engines in the east, and Mr. Bookie finally said: "I believe that's a blooming destroyer and she must have picked up our interrupted radio. We'll know in ten minutes."

There were no other flashes, for some time, and then out of the east a sound like gas escaping and there was an explosion in the dark west.

Then all at once Ivan snuggled into me and whispered in his frightened way: "I say, Frank Gaze, aren't we in the way? That de-

stroyer must pass near by to chase after that raider."

But I did not pay much attention to him for the excitement of the chase had gripped me and I felt like standing up and cheering the old destroyer on. You see, I had never seen one in action and I had always wanted to. But, jiminy! who wouldn't?

There was no question now of the sound. It was great engines racing out of the blue black east and they could not have been miles away. But we were low down in the lifeboat and it was bedtime, so we could not see so far.

Then came a quick white flash—the first we had seen good—and almost instantly the booming report of a big gun.

I swear I heard that shell overhead. We looked right around to the west and this time it must have hit something, for there was a flare and the noise of two explosions; the second louder.

"A bull's-eye!" yelled Ivan excitedly. We all sat expectantly, like fans when it's two and three on the batter, and there is a runner with the tying run off third.

Then low on the western horizon we could make out a yellow glow beginning. Visitation clapped his hands, and I let out a war whoop like a Sioux, that made the lascars look at me and say something fast in their mother tongue.

But I shut up quickly, when, without a

warning, something came sailing out of the western heavens and hit the water, maybe, two hundred yards to the east of us. A great silver black flower pot of water rose and the lifeboat shook like I remember our bungalow at Los Angeles did once in an earthquake. Then it sounded like Niagara falling and an old fish, maybe, six inches or a foot long, came flop down right in front of me. He—that's the fish—was stunned dead, all right. It isn't pleasant to have it rain wet fishes all about you on a dark night. They might hit you and hurt you badly.

Mr. Bookie stood up, balancing himself, one hand on the head of a lascar, and he was looking into the east through his glasses. Finally he snapped them back into his case, that was strapped across his shoulder, and he remarked: "Any place is as safe as any place else just at present. We'll stay just where we are and that destroyer should pass some hundred yards off our bows."

The pursuing boat now had a lit up target and she was coming up like the Twentieth Century Limited, when it's twenty minutes late, or better, scouts when they hear those blessed words of cookie, "Come and get it."

Somehow you wish there was a wire netting like they have in front of the grandstand back of home plate at Ebbets Field, or there was a naval traffic cop handy to stand in front of you

and to wave that destroyer to veer off a bit. But, honestly, it was great to have a seat right in the middle of things and I would not have missed it for anything, only I wished my Cobra Patrol was along to enjoy it. A scout is generous, you know.

Then we could make out the blacker destroyer and smoke trailing behind her and blotting out all the horizon stars. She was headed, as the Second Officer said, to pass a bit off our bows.

A light showed somewhere on her and suddenly was shut off. The noise was one continuous roar and you had to listen to imagine you could make out different sounds.

But we all forgot about death in the air, when out of the night something whizzed up in a hurry and passed under our hull like a Subway Express, and white, angry waters surged up all about our gunwales.

Mr. Bookie gave a sharp order in, I guess you would call it "Lascarese," and the four lascars pulled their oars like anything.

Then he said softly in English: "That's the first and, please God, the last time a torpedo passes under my keel. She must have scraped!"

"Was that a real torpedo?" cried Visitatio, and I could see he wanted to go home right away.

While the water was still foaming and dis-

turbed, the long destroyer rushed at us; white waves even in the black night leaping from her bows. She suddenly grew large and funneled, and as my heart began to beat like I had been running a mile, she shot by, maybe, a hundred yards off our bow.

Shot was the only way she went through that water. Rather, the waves got out of her way, like I saw a crowd scatter once in New Orleans when a mad dog came down the street. Only they said afterwards it was not mad.

Then she was gone, and it smelt smoky and gasoline-like. And the lascars pulled like blazes to head our little lifeboat into the mountain range of water that raced toward us. We three held on to each other and the stern sheets as though we were on the Human Roulette Wheel at Coney.

But we all forgot the wake of the destroyer and our boat tossing on it in the racket that broke out by the western horizon. The whole sky split and I did not have to be told that that torpedo had found its mark and the *Khandala* was amply avenged.

Somehow, when you know people, even enemies, are raining down on the water over on the blazing horizon, you do not feel happy and joyous. But you feel like praying, and I said some Hail Marys fast.

Then Mr. Bookie discovered that four—that was half—of our oars had been lost or smashed

in the wild rockings of the last few minutes, and, cracky! he certainly could talk hot Lascarese! I would not translate what he said, even if I could, if there was a woman or children within half a mile.

It's a funny thing, but do you ever remember hearing of a sailor joining—and sticking to—the Holy Name Society? I never did. But, maybe, they are not—what's that word?—legible and can't get in.

Finally, with the four remaining oars, and one of them was cracked, the lascars started to row towards the west.

Now there was no booming and no burning along that horizon. It was just as black as the inside of death. But we knew we had to get to that west to stand a chance of being rescued.

None of us felt much like talking. We had heard too much for one night. And soon Ivan and Visitation either side of me were asleep. And I guess I must have unconsciously gone and bought a through ticket, for the next thing I remember was opening my eyes and there was the sun coming out of the water and it was already hot.

But though I looked all around the round horizon, all I could see was a blue calm ring and a still sky and us nine right in the geographical center of that sea and that sky. At first, I thought last night—one of the swellest

nights I ever remember for adventures, but one of the worst for sleep—was a dream and a delusion. But looking at the two rowing lascars and the other two curled up asleep, and at the white face of Captain Tyne and his white dinner coat all stained with dirty water and with—with another color—I woke wide awake.

The Second Officer looked very tired and he needed a shave, but he smiled and said: "Well, Scouty, I was wondering which of you three sleeping cherubim would come to first. Lay forward now and ease Captain Tyne's head."

I crawled over the lascars and, squeezing in the narrow bows, took the captain's head into my lap. Somehow, he did not seem so stern as he had on the *Khandala's* decks, but weak as a baby.

It was getting hotter and I said my Morning Offering, which is the short form of my morning prayers—the kind I say at home when I have overslept and there is danger of being late for school. Then I felt better and could look around.

There is one nice thing about lifeboat life, and that is you do not have to fuss about washing too particularly and putting on a clean shirt, that gets you around the neck, and parting your hair in the middle. But I am getting personal.

All this time Captain Tyne was groaning and his breathing was funny, like his lung was missing fire or something.

I shifted gently around so as to put his face in the shade. And then it all happened so suddenly. For he opened his eyes. They were blue, like china tea-cups, and he looked up into my face and smiled. Gee! It was a 100% smile and I had to go and do likewise. He tried to speak something and I could not just catch what he was saying, so I put my ear down closer and he said, just as distinctly as a good Victrola record: "Willie Tyne! My little Willie, that I buried in Fulham, when did you come?"

I must say the captain was talking funny. But he looked so kind and gentle and fatherly that I had to put on my scout smile. I did not know what else to do.

I was going to explain my name was Frank Gaze and that no undertaker had buried me in Fulham, wherever that place is, when his next question stopped me. For he said, and his voice was just as clear and distinct, not a bit gruff like he always spoke on the *Khandala*: "Sonny-baba, I thought you were with God these five years!"

Then, maybe, some bright spirit whispered the correct answer to me, and I knew he took me for his dead boy, and I remembered reading how sometimes when people are near the

end, they sometimes think they see what isn't there.

Captain Tyne's face was chalky white and blue veins were standing out on his forehead and I do not know what made me say what I did, but I leaned 'way low and I whispered: "Daddy, if you want to come with me, you say, 'Dear Lord, I am very sorry that I ever did anything that hurt You.' Say that now, Daddy." And like a good little child, the big burly captain repeated in that funny clear voice, "Of course, dear Lord, I am very sorry that I ever did anything that ever, ever hurt You." I could see there was no camouflage in his voice.

Then he looked up at me with his bluest of sky-blue eyes and smiled like my own Daddy does sometimes and he said: "Willie, my little Willie!" And there was a slight movement of his head, stretching up, and then he met God.

I had never really seen a man die before, though once I had seen one stabbed and a little girl, who had been run over by an auto truck, and I felt like feeling scared, but when I looked down again there was that happy fixed look in Captain Tyne's blue eyes and I just could not be afraid.

I called the Second Officer, and he came quickly over the seats and the lascars. One look, and he shoved his hand into the breast of the captain's dinner coat. Then he took off his cap and said quietly: "Well, Francis, the

old man has gone topside. Quick passage, wasn't it? I gave him till about eight bells, but he slipped his cable a little sooner."

Then he patted me on the shoulder and said something complimentary, that does not matter in the least.

Mr. Bookie took my O. D. slip-on and laid it softly over the face and the open blue eyes.

Visitatio and Ivan, fallen together into the space where I had left, still slept like they were tired. And, gee! they did look like Mother's Darlings coming home in the trolley from a day at Coney.

The sea all around was blue and calm and sparkling, and it would make you think we were off on a picnic, but there was no sight of anything floating; just shiny waves, and the sun trying successfully to climb out of the east, and getting heated up in doing so.

Mr. Bookie gave a command to the two lascars, who were rowing like machines, and they stopped and one of them shoved the sleeping lascars with his bare toe and they grunted and woke.

Then he told me not to mention Captain Tyne just yet, and that I was the Beast to wake the Sleeping Beauties. I cupped my hand and reaching over the side let those two have a sheet of water.

It worked all right and Visitatio started to yell something excited. Ivan went to sleep

again. And I had to reach over the side twice more and Ivan did not like that. Mr. Bookie came aft and told us to cut it out, and he broke open the little compartment under the stern sheets and got out a tin of biscuits and a tin cup for water.

I had completely forgotten that lifeboats store provisions for just such mornings, and didn't I want to dig into those rations! I do not think anything, except ice cream, ever tasted as heavenly as those soft granite biscuits and that warmish drink that one of the lascars drew from the water tank under the seat.

But the Second Officer was hard as dried cement and only let each have two biscuits and one cup of water, for he said: "That's all for this meal, boys, for we may have a long row ahead of us."

I noticed he himself only took one biscuit and his cup was not full of water.

Then we had a council about the prospects and it seemed general that some boat would cruise hereabouts and pick us up by afternoon, or next day at the latest.

Mr. Bookie said as we were the last lifeboat away, we must have rowed the opposite way from the other *Khandala* lifeboats which were together and had the motor to tow them, and the destroyer very likely picked them up and thought we were lost.

Then the Second Officer and the lascars had a long powwow in Lascarese, and, finally, Mr. Bookie got out a chart and looked at the sun and did some sums in his mind. I know, for his eyebrows came together, same as mine used to do in that old Algebra class, when I needed to get good marks.

He told us that there were some uninhabited islands to the nor'northeast, maybe, twenty-five miles away, and we would keep her headed in that direction.

After that he said: "No supercargoes in this ship. Brown Jim and I"—Brown Jim was the lascar with the healed up scar down one cheek, who spoke some English—"Brown Jim and I will stand watch and watch. And you, De Souza, and these two lascars will be in my starboard watch, and Jim and Gaze and Williams and Rama"—he pointed to the last sailor—"will make up the port watch. Two hours' trick till we beach this boat or get picked up." He told that to Brown Jim, who salaamed and grinned at Ivan and me.

He continued seriously: "But, before the starboard watch stands by, we have a solemn duty to perform. A brave man lately has completed his duty. Boys"—he spoke to Ivan and Visatio directly—"boys, Captain Tyne died about half an hour ago and we'll bury him now."

Then the Second Officer, or Captain Bookie

as he was now, told Brown Jim to help him, and while we all sat still, for too many could not stand at once in that little boat, the two scrambled forward. With Jim's aid, he fastened the small anchor short up to the feet.

They lifted the body and it was stiff and stayed put. When it was on the gunwale, Captain Bookie turned his head and said: "Say the Lord's Prayer, boys." And we did out loud and somewhat together.

Visitatio and I finished it right, only Ivan ended up strangely, "For Thine is the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Just when we came to the end of that Our Father, Captain Bookie said out loud: "I consign thee to the deep and the mercy of the Lord." And he and Brown Jim gave a heave and the body splashed.

I saw for a second the blue eyes open and looking happy. Then it disappeared and it did not come up any more. And the sun felt hot as anything, and so did I.

CHAPTER V

I COME ASHORE.

WELL, I want to tell you right now there was not much chance for chilblains and frozen ears in that blue Indian Ocean circle as we rowed through the morning.

We were all tired after last night's high doings, and we did not talk much. Just rowed our trick and slept in between. And to think this time yesterday, I was playing Visitatio De Souza deck quoits, and beating him, too, and Mr. Bookie was on the bridge and Ivan Williams was very likely down in the cabin, opening another tin of chocolates, for his Mater surely did have a stock.

But, finally, the sun got so hot that I felt faint. Same as I do some mornings, serving Mass before breakfast. You know, that watch-me-wabble feeling.

Captain Bookie saw me soldiering at my oar and he said: "Belay there, young Gaze. We'll have chow. Serang."

Serang is Brown Jim's native title and it means quartermaster.

So the serang at his orders broke out some more provisions; biscuits and tinned corned wil-lie.

Captain Bookie whacked up each our portion, and he was a Semitic, but he was right.

It was not a square meal, even a square inch meal, but, somehow, after I had washed the last crumb down with my tin of warmish water, I felt less bad, and Ivan and Visitatio did too, for they began to talk about last night. That's a sure sign.

Finally, after we had rowed an hour or two, Ivan whispered to me he thought a swim would be jolly good.

I agreed at once and asked: "Captain, any objections to stopping your ship awhile, till we have a dip and cool off?"

"Isn't it too soon after chota-hazri?" he asked.

But I assured him nobody would ever get indigestion after that whiff of a sample meal we had eaten, and he agreed, too.

Well, it did not take us long to get ready. I was first and I was just balancing myself on the seat and gunwale, and had made the Sign of the Cross as I always do before I dive, when, with my hands coming together, I noticed a darkish shadow in the blue clear water.

It was a moving, lazy shadow too, for our lifeboat was just rocking. I thought of a torpedo.

Captain Bookie saw that shadow soon as I

did, for he called quietly: "Sit down a second, Scouty."

Then that dark shadow grew bigger, sailed up closer, and a black shiny fin broke the surface, maybe, twenty-five feet off.

We all had one good look at it. Ivan and Visitatio and I right then started dressing again.

That was once I hated the thought of swimming.

It was awfully still in that lifeboat, and, finally, Brown Jim spoke something in his lingo and grinned at us.

Captain Bookie asked: "The serang wants to know if you babas still wish to go swimming or shall we stand another trick at the oars?"

The three of us shook our heads like the pendulum of a clock.

That boy-eating shark came along for a while as company till Captain Bookie pulled out his automatic and let him have one good. It took that hint and went away, "unwept, unhonored and unsung," as a poem says I had to learn for memory once.

It was my turn to cuddle up in the stern sheets and try to sleep, but I could not. That dark shadow, somehow, overcast the sun's rays and I said three Hail Marys most fervently and thanked Our Lady. It surely felt good to remember that I was a regular Sodalist of the Junior Sodality at the Prep. And right then

I knew there might be reels of movie stuff ahead of me, but I'd see Home and Mother some day sure. Yes; and Daddy too! It's a great feeling, I'll tell the pagan world!

Then I was dozing and, maybe, it was the pang of hunger or something, for I began dreaming of all the beautiful shipwrecks I had ever, ever read about or seen on the screen.

And the picture I remembered best was one I had seen in a museum. It was either in the big, gray museum up in Central Park, New York, back of that Egyptian needle statue, or that studio-looking one down in Washington, near the State, War and Navy Building. I do not remember which, but the painting showed about four or five passengers tossing on a broken life-raft and there was a dead man half on and half off the raft, and the rest of the folks were famished-looking and all about were just blue waves and one shark's fin.

Then I must have gone dead asleep, for the next I remember was Ivan shaking and throwing water over me generously, and yelling like a house afire, "I say, Frank, there's land ahead. Land, Asia!"

Sooner than anything—though it must have been more than an hour later and we stopped once to watch a floating island of a giant turtle, taking a snooze on the surface—we could see the blue cone of a hill rising out of the horizon,

and Captain Bookie calculated; "Well, boys, we'll be ashore by four bells at this speed."

"He means six o'clock," explained Ivan in a whisper to me, as though I did not know ship time!

As we drew nearer, Ivan said: "See; the rocky top looks like a man's nose, when he's sleeping on his back."

"No; it's a great king cobra's hood!" cried Visitatio. "I know. There's one hill that shape in Khandala, up above Bombay, and—"

That was it exactly and I exclaimed:

"Cobra's hood is right! And I reckon that names the island." And that's how I accidentally came to christen Cobra Island before we ever landed on it. I called it dead right too, but I do not want to claim any credit for that.

On the sides and below that cobra-hooded top were groves of tall slanty palms and teak, and, below, breakers every once in a while breaking white as milk. But no docks and no houses and no wireless poles. And those were the city improvements I wanted to see most of all.

When we had come about half a mile off shore, the sun was behind us, and it lit everything up just like on a stage.

Captain Bookie had been looking and looking through his glasses and I could see he was worrying a lot over something, for those little

wrinkles broke out around his eyes and his lips froze into a straight line. That's a sure sign anybody is thinking and has not seen the answer yet. You watch us students next time we are doing a test paper and see for yourself.

Finally, he found the answer, for he sat down and said: "Well, boys, there's a coral reef ahead and I have been trying to pick out a channel through it to your Cobra Island, and I think I have. But, now, you are sensible kiddies, so I am going to speak frankly. Passing through the surf we may get upset and have to swim for it. Now, Gaze, there's nothing wrong with your swimming, and, Ivan, you swim fairly well, I've watched you in the deck pool from the bridge, but you had better put these preservers on." He kicked some that lay in the bottom of the lifeboat. "And if the breakers get us, Ivan, you batten down that mouth-hatch of yours, and let Scouty here tow you to the beach. I'll stand by De Souza. Remember, let the waves take you and kick with them and don't lose your head. We're not going to upset if I can prevent it, but we may ship a couple of seas and I want to be prepared."

Ivan whispered to me as I tied him into his preserver: "Maybe there are sharks there."

But I told him no; as sharks were lazy and do not like breakers, where they have to swim.

That's a real fact, 'cause I heard a lady explorer lecture once, who had been all over, say so and she ought to know.

Then Captain Bookie ordered us three to sit quietly in the stern sheets—we just fitted in uncomfortably; Brown Jim and one of those unanimous lascars—if that's the word means you don't know his name—took one pair of oars and Rama and that other lascar sat in the other rowing seat. Captain stationed himself forward, his knees braced against the gun-wales and his glasses hanging loose from the strap across his bosom.

He ordered the sailors to pull and they swung the lifeboat around quarter of a circle till her bows were pointed islandwards. We had a grandstand seat to see all that blazing green island. White lather breakers, and, beyond, as we rose to each swell, a glimpse of snow-bright beach and big brown and pink rocks, ending in the green and brown hedge of just millions of palms and mangroves. Back of them all, that most interesting looking hill in the center that towered up, maybe, a quarter of a mile. It was capped with that great rocky gray mass that looked more than ever like a cobra in striking pose.

I saw Visitatio's lips moving and it reminded me to get into wireless communication with my own Guardian Angel too. For surf is surf and no place for a lifeboat.

The boom of the surf that had sounded refreshing at a distance, now grew into a roar, like the waves were angry.

Then we were out of the ocean swells and into the whiteness of great breakers. At once you feel puny and helpless, like when a heavyweight champion shakes hands with you.

Nobody had to tell us three to hold on. We lived up to the best traditions of glue and leeches.

I thought once I had surely bumped my head on the hard blue sky, but it was only Ivan's nearest ear. That's not much consolation.

Now my uncle Vincent has an amusement device down at Coney Island that they call "The Virginia Reel." You get into a round car and hold on and it boxes the compass every two seconds or so, coming down an incline, but, believe me, that whirligig device was like resting forever in a coffin alongside of our motion in that *Khandala* lifeboat at the mercy of those breakers!

The poor lascars would pull when we were going downhill and hold on on the up grade. Captain Bookie had given up his Washington-crossing-the-Delaware pose and was frozen to the gunwales, getting a free bath, and the only thing dry on me, after one of those waves came calling, must have been my slip-on and my shoes and my "Radiolite" watch. Those were

in the watertight locker. But after the all day sun bath, I was not complaining.

Then like a line drive over second, as it always does happen to me, came trouble.

We were in the channel between the coral reefs and going Jim Dandy, even though the boat was trying to imitate a bucking broncho. But a sweeping comber snapped both star-board oars off at the spoons, leaving the handles, useless as sticks, in Jim's and Rama's hands. They would have caught crabs, if they had not been good sailors and knew how to recover themselves.

The lifeboat was helpless as a launch broken down in the Niagara Rapids, and we swung around and onto the reef. Things happened. We shipped a sea and I yelled: "Hold on!" to Ivan and Visitatio. I held on myself like they say Grim Death does.

The two port side lascars swelled up like yeast out of their seats and drifted to leeward. The lifeboat struck something hard and we bumped, bumped. I saw Captain Bookie come flying back and grab Visitatio. He shouted something to me. Ivan shut his lips tight, according to orders, and looked piteously at me. And the sea closed over both our heads.

Next I knew I was swimming for life in the angriest waves I ever, ever want to meet. But I had hold of Ivan. His face was all

white and red from a nasty cut on his forehead and in another second the red had all been washed away by the sea. I surely was glad I was dressed lightly and I remembered Captain Bookie's advice to go with the breakers.

Once my foot struck coral, like hard lace, and I knew it was cut, 'cause it did not pain, only grew numb. Then I was in deep water again, swimming breast stroke with my free hand. I opened my mouth at the wrong time and breathed water and that made me gasp and sputter.

I wanted the worst way to let go Ivan—whom I thought was gone, not a wiggle out of him—but I remembered Captain Bookie's promise to him and then, I was a scout and I just could not let go. So I fought on and on. Something hit me hard, like I had been tackled from behind in a football scrimmage and I had to give up breathing. I did think I was having my last swim and I murmured: "Sacred Heart of Jesus, in Thee I trust!" For I believe that's the very best last prayer to die with. Am I right?

Then an old granddaddy of a comber seemed to pitch us into an outdoor swimming pool and retired, leaving pink and gray coral like a forest of sponges visible for an instant. And next second, or next day, I just don't know which, I felt welcome smooth wet sand under foot and I was struggling and falling and

gasping into clear water up to my waist, and towing Ivan, who was limp as old clothes.

Right then I felt better, for I had not let go that boy, and that feeling more than anything else revived me, and with Ivan, white and crumpled and bleeding over his lifebelt, in my arms I went on somehow.

And the next I remember was good old Brown Jim, wet as a rat and his red turban hanging all soggy over one ear, working over me and I could see Captain Bookie going through the same setting-up exercises with raggy Ivan.

Jim left me. I was weak and my head was whirling like a merry-go-round and I did not know whether the booming of surf that I heard was between my ears or down on the beach. I just lay there exhausted. That's the word.

But in ten minutes I was hungry again and able to look about. There, drawn up beyond the wave line lay the still bodies of those two lascars, faces in the sand, and I knew they had been smashed on the cruel coral reef and had landed on another, far distant, beach.

Further up the shore Ivan was just coming to, for he was lying on the Captain's arm and coughing industriously. I guess he was getting the last of the water out of his system.

Visitatio and Rama were all right, and those two, with Brown Jim, were back in the water up to their waists pulling in what was left of

that *Khandala* lifeboat. Just her gunwales were awash, but her bow, where Captain Bookie had stood and Captain Tyne had died in my lap, was missing. It was easy as anything to see that a glass case in the Smithsonian Museum was about the best she could hope for in the future.

Then Captain Bookie spied me and he shouted across: "Good scout, Frank, I saw that bull dog grip you had on Ivan coming ashore and I knew he was all right. If he had only kept his hatch battened down, he would have enjoyed his ride through the breakers. Come here and see this pigeon's egg that is forming on his port brow. He's been telling me the lifeboat kicked him."

I got up weakly and started to come across. It seemed as though the fringe of mangroves and palms to the left were jumping and waving, like a crowd on the sidelines after a touchdown, and I was walking on a trick rubber flooring of sand and tiny little dancing blue and cream and pink shells.

Captain gave me a hand and Ivan grinned wanly. But he reached out to grasp my hand and started to say: "Frank, old dear, I—"

But I stopped his thanks: "Oh, forget it. It was just a good turn."

Then Visatio ran up and told us the chow had been salvaged, and you bet Ivan and I brightened when Cap yelled to Brown Jim:

"Serve up a square meal, serang. Boys, we'll have dinner al fresco here on our private beach, and after that we'll hunt about for a night's lodging."

So we six survivors squatted in a semicircle there on the warm sand, which felt good as a blanket on a chilly night, and dug into that first of many war-time meals on our Cobra Island. Biscuits and corned beef and fresh water beef-tea. It tasted just right. And though I was tired out and battered up, yet I ate. But, gee! you'd have done the same, wouldn't you?

CHAPTER VI

I MAKE DISCOVERIES

Now, if my Grandmother, who's an old lady, had been wrecked in the breakers and cast up on an island like we were, she would have talked about it for twenty years straight. I'm not like Grandmother. I take after Dad.

So to go on. Almost before we knew it night came. A funny thing! There is no twilight down near the Line. I don't know whether it is their form of Daylight Saving, or something, but, anyway, when the time is about two down in the ninth for the Day side, everything gets a stagey look—all blues and greens and golds and reds. You know, that architectural look—if that's the word that means not genuine—that kind of a look to it. Then in about five minutes you could use your Radiolite and the stars are all hung out, big as ship lights.

That's the way it was there on Cobra Island and we were stretched out about the flames and our faces were yellow and flickering shadows. It was comfy.

The dying fire must have made me very sleepy, or something, for I wound up my watch

and then I had to hurry across lots in my night prayers, and, next, I heard a screeching overhead. It was morning and the racket came from about a million of Irish colored parrots, flying from the jungle. It sounded like the Bird House in the Bronx, only worse.

I saw Ivan Williams and Visitatio De Souza, each with an ear in the sand, and I let 'em have their late sleep, 'cause they did look tired. You know, it is not always restful coming through the surf in an upset life-boat.

Captain Bookie and the lascars were nowhere about. I noticed their tracks, leading off towards the jungle, but I did not worry over that.

What I did worry a lot about was principally eats. Maybe, it was sleeping on that beach that gave me the pangs of hunger, but, believe me, honestly they were not just mere pangs. They were pains and full-grown agonies.

Right then, to make matters worse, do you know what memory stood grinning at me in my imagination? It was the receipt for cooking bacon, that's printed in my Scout Handbook. And I found myself repeating it over and over: "Slice bacon quite thin; remove rind, which makes slices curl up. Fry on grid-dle or put on a sharp end of a stick and hold over the hot coals. Keeping turning so as to

brown on both sides." Oh! gee whiz! I had every blessed thing but a hunk of bacon right there on Cobra Island beach!

That thing made me recall the next receipt on the same page of the Handbook—"Canned Salmon on Toast"—and I started to repeat that receipt, but it was too much, so I drifted down to the wave line for a distraction, and the water looked so clear and green and calling that I went in and floated about in the surf.

Only, it did not do much good, for coming out, I felt hungrier than my dog, "Pilot," did once when he got locked up accidentally in our coal cellar for sixteen hours by mistake. When we heard him, he almost bit Katie, our cook, taking a bone out of her hand. And "Pilot" would usually take a bone as politely as you and I would.

Then I heard a cry: "Gaze! Frank Gaze!" I looked up beach and there were Cap and the two lascars and they were just coming out of the fringe of green jungle.

When I sprinted across the white sands to them—Joy!—Rama and Brown Jim had in their arms big cocoanuts and a couple of pineapples and real—not the mummies they sell you at fruit stands—but real dates in bunches!

I woke Ivan and Visitatio by tossing date stones at them.

We breakfasted sitting up in bed, like that

Dying Gaul statue picture they have in my Ancient History book.

Finally, Cap Bookie said: "Now, my lads, we're wrecked on a beautiful tropical fruit island without all the modern conveniences. But we're not too far off the track of vessels and one will surely stick her nose over the horizon some day soon and rescue all of us—who are left." He added that in a lower voice, and I could see he was thinking of the two broken lascars whom Brown Jim and Rama had buried in the sands last evening.

"So," he continued, "I vote we make the best of this picnic. It isn't every one who can have a lovely deserted island to explore at his leisure and I've always wanted to try the Crusoe life for a while. Let each of us look on this as a jolly lark and keep a stiff upper lip."

He looked around and we all nodded and I wore my best scout smile. But that was dead easy. Who would not in that situation? Gosh! I'd have paid real money for this adventure, and here it had come costing nothing. No wonder I was happy, saving money. A scout is thrifty, you know.

Captain Bookie rose and talked loud, like a scout-master does to attract silence and attention: "First event on to-day's program of sports is a hike into that jungle, just to get the lay of the land. Those who want kitchen po-

lice, may stay and help Rama. The rest be ready in two minutes."

I was equipped in exactly one hundred and fifteen seconds, before the time limit was up. I only had a few seconds on Ivan and Visitatio.

It was a great feeling as we drew near that jungle. You see, I had never seen a jungle really close up, and this was not a bit like the woods I had camped out in last summer with my Troop by Long Island Sound, where we had eats seasoned with sand and armies of ants crawled over you at night.

But when we left the white, warm beach we entered a golden glow of a cocoanut palm grove. Just endless pillars of 'em, supporting a leafy ceiling and you could get glimpses of the bluest of blue skies, where there were leaks in that leafy roof overhead, and it was cooler there.

Then I saw the first one. He was swinging from one palm to another overhead. Of course, I had seen them often in the Menagerie and at the Bronx Zoo, and, once, Dad bought me a baby one, only it died of pneumonia, 'cause Mother objected so much, but this was a real, live, free, honest-to-goodness one with too much whiskers and tail and restless as an eel. Ivan spotted him too and he cried: "I say, man, there's a blooming monk!"

Then suddenly there were ten in sight and

all migrating fast. They would swing like ladies in aerial acts at the Big Show and catch another branch. Oh! it's a great feeling to see monkeys at large and know you are living on the same island with them!

Finally, Captain Bookie observed we were not out to catch monks—he had three already, he thought—and to come along and look out for snakes, as we had no puttees on and he had no First Aid kit handy.

Then he cautioned: "You boys watch out and see if you can sight anything that looks like it could be cooked and eaten. That bully beef in the tins won't last another week, and I don't fancy a straight fish and fruit diet."

That made me think seriously, so I started to scout in earnest.

After we crossed that cocoanut palm grove we came to a thicker jungle, where more brown rocks appeared and there were slender bamboos that made good staffs, and some kind of scarlet and gold trees that looked like a circus parade and great trees with a whole snarl of branches and stems growing back into the earth. These looked like a diagram of a central telephone system. Cap called that kind a "banian."

Then in the distance I saw something white, and it moved and I cried out cautiously: "Cap, what's that?" I pointed.

We all froze and the captain put his glasses

on them and he did not have to tell us to keep quiet.

He said to the others: "You stay here and make about as much noise as a tombstone while Scouty and I reconnoiter."

So we two went forward like shadows and when we got behind a tamerind, Cap gave me the glasses and asked: "How many do you make out over there by that flat brown rock?"

I took one good look and I whispered back happily: "Harlem goats, Cap. Four of 'em."

He nodded, saying: "It's mighty lucky we are to leeward, but make no noise now and we'll have steaks of a kind for dinner. I can't afford to waste a cartridge."

He loosened his automatic and stalked forward. For a life-sized man, Captain Bookie could travel sound-proof. He should have been a Red Indian named "Creeping Shadow." That's right, he should.

When he got a good distance ahead and the vegetation almost hid him from me, I saw him straighten up and take steady aim. He put down his revolver and again crept closer. Then he sighted and let go.

I jumped a bit, for that shot echoed in that jungle like shooting off giant firecrackers in the dining room at midnight, but the parrots overhead, they must have had nervous prostration, or hysterics! Racket!

Two goats in a hurry crashed by near me

and I let one of them, the black one, have it with a stone. The only good it did was to make him go faster.

Cap motioned us three forward and when we came running up, he was tapping with his automatic a black and white goat that was kicking awfully. It was a nice goat too, and looked like "Admiral Dewey," that Dad once gave me when I was little in Milwaukee, only she would eat everything and the neighbors across the street objected and she was sent away, still hungry.

"Got him, first shot," said Cap, happily, "and there are enough eighty-cents-a-pound steaks and chops and ribs and limbs and stews there to keep the wolf from our door."

Then Captain Bookie got a fireman's lift and shouldered William, and I helped part of the way.

We started back for the beach and met Brown Jim and Rama and they quickly relieved us of that old goat. I needed a bath and a wash and a clean-up, but the Captain did worse than I.

The other goats had disappeared and so had most of the game in sight. It was still like night as we hiked back, only birds, making shrill cries, circling high above the palm tops. I guess they were gun shy, or something. Now I had bought a hunting dog that way once. "Fetch" would hide in the cellar when-

ever he heard a gun, so I had to sell him and buy rabbits.

Suddenly I cried: "I hear water falling, fellows."

We all stopped and, sure enough, it sounded like some one had turned on the taps and the bathtub was overflowing. You know, when the ceiling gets damp and bits of it flop down, and you go to the foot of the stairs and listen. That kind of a noise.

Cap Bookie said: "We're out to learn our island, so let's investigate."

We climbed some rocks ahead and—angel scouts have nothing better!

Let me tell you about that camp site. The rocks, gray and brown and pinkish, with coconut palms about their skyline, and mangoes with yellow fruit handy, fell away and left a sort of a good sized stadium, maybe, not as big as the Polo Grounds. There, at one end towards the east was a dream of a waterfall. It fell over smooth as a circus horse's mane, and there was a monkey and a gang of parrots drinking on its very edge.

But the best was it fell into a darling swimming pool, that was oval and blue and looked deep and inviting. At its lower end was a tiny half moon of a beach of whitewashed sand, shaded by glorious trees. Below that, the water rushed over a silver rapids and fell out of sight down another hidden falls and out into

the blue Indian Ocean that just showed beyond.

I'll never forget that first sight!

Captain Bookie just told what was in all our minds, when he stated: "This looks like our permanent headquarters on Cobra Island."

Then we scrambled down to investigate our new camp site.

More joy! It was cool there and the spot looked made to camp in. Now if Father Tumulty—he's my scout-master—had been handy, he'd have wirelessly for the whole Troop. And, gee! I did feel mean, falling into this paradise and knowing the Cobras, my patrol, were on the other side of the world, just starting Repetitions in school. A scout is generous, you know, and, anyway, there's more fun when you are with a gang. I could just see Mousie Moran's eyes dancing.

We trudged along through sand like rich carpets, only I threw cartwheels and Ivan and Viz tried to, and everything just appeared better and better.

There were "eats" trees; cocoanuts and date and green breadfruit and mangoes. Why! a fruit-stand man would pay good money just to be turned loose on any of those trees. And a florist would not have to grow stock, if he had that free flower shop in his back yard. Violet, purple and pink necktie-colored orchids and yellow flowers, like the kind we have

on our church altar in summer time. I don't mean sunflowers, but costlier. And red flowers, and some white ones, and lots of mixed shades.

Back beyond the brink of that smooth falls, which Viz called Monkey Falls right away, you could see the sheer green jungle sides of the hill and up, up to the gray pile on top that had looked like a hooded cobra from the sea, but from where we stood it just seemed to be the prow of the greatest super-superdread-naught ever built.

We hunkered down and gave the place a careful inspection and Cap Bookie said: "Lads, what do you think?"

Visitatio and Ivan cried: "Jolly good, sir," but I said: "I don't think, Cap; I *know*. This is where we board and lodge till the rescue ship comes. And right there is where we'll put up a lean-to for the night. Am I right?"

"Yes," affirmed Cap; "and with that bamboo and the rest of the lifeboat we ought to be able to build a bungalow. I say, we go back to the lascars and move in this afternoon."

"Right-o! Captain Bookie," we cried, but I added: "You forgot one thing."

Cap and the two boys looked at me, as though I intended to ask for the rent money.

"You forgot to try out the pool."

"That's a fact," said Visitatio, who does not know how to swim much. But I noticed

Captain and Ivan stooping over to unlace their shoe-strings.

They did not beat me into that pool, not by one and one quarter yards.

The rocks, below Monkey Falls, looked inviting, so I swam across and clambered up. Just as I thought, nature had blasted them just right.

There was one stuck out like a rough spring-board, and it was, maybe, a drop of fifteen feet into the deep pool water. Behind me was the continual cool roar of the falls splashing and spraying me.

I poised and flew and not a ripple as I cut that surface. It was too good and I raced back and passed Cap and Ivan, who were also clambering up to the rocky spring-board.

From this point we could see out to sea through the lower opening of the place. Just blue and sunlight blinding the waves. The picture looked like one of those posters they hung in tourists' ticket offices before the World War started. "Winter in the West Indies." You remember the kind.

Then we stood there and saw Viz paddling alone in his wading pool by the shore, and the scenery was just like the south of Heaven must be.

Ivan talked like a poet who needs paper and pencil, and Cap Bookie said "Bully" perhaps ten times. I'm medium in those descriptive

adjectives—I only get 80 in English Composition—but now if my sister had been there. Wow! Shades of Shakespeare!

So I took another “sailor” and when I came to the surface Ivan and Cap were just taking off together, and Ivan missed me like that torpedo did our lifeboat the other night.

Captain Bookie ordered regretfully: “All ashore.” And when we got there he counseled: “Hurry, boys, this swimming will keep. We must get the lascars here and shake down, for this is our camp *pro tem*.” That’s Latin for “the rest of our natural lives” on Cobra Island.

We soon found a natural trail that led out by the lower end of the white, tumbling rapids.

About half a mile down the sands we spied the lascars and the smoke of a fire spiraling up. Coming nearer—ah! those delicious odors! Talk about Hunter’s Stew on a hike! I never knew cooked goat smelt so lovely, for Brown Jim and Rama had the best of that goat over the fire, and I must record that we had dinner, first class, with unlimited helpings. It was like Thanksgiving used to be, before turkey “and etc.,” went over to the H. C. L.

It was not so much of a hike back, for this time, instead of going through the jungle, which is no more place to lug bundles than the Subway the week before Christmas, we followed the beach till we came near the cliff where the water fell into the ocean. It was

harder climbing up that trail to the camp site, and Visitatio dropped what was left of the goat twice, when he stumbled. But you get used to that shipwrecked on an island.

Then we were back on the little beach beside the pool. Visitatio and Ivan and I raced into the water, but Cap soon had us out, busy getting bamboo and palm leaves.

Brown Jim would make a good scout-master, or better, a good scout, for in no time he had a lean-to up, and I helped him thatch it and a regular bed, made of more palm leaves.

Cap and Rama did something to that cooked goat meat that made it taste even better. And we had more biscuits and bully beef and fruit in season and some kind of shell-fish Rama had gathered on the beach. It tasted good, but too salty, like wild duck does.

That was a supper and the end of a 100% day.

After that I do not just recall what they were talking about, for all I remember was somebody—I think it was the serang—lifting me and laying me down in that regular feather bed under the lean-to.

And boy-eating cannibals could have come and skinned and parboiled and carved and salted and peppered and eaten most of me for all I cared. But that's the way a good scout should sleep in the open, or home, or anywhere, except, maybe, in the police station.

CHAPTER VII

I CELEBRATE MY FOURTEENTH BIRTHDAY

Now I am going to be a little National Board of Censors and cut out a lot of film—how we fixed up that camp site by Monkey Falls, and about the, maybe, one hundred good swims we had in the pool, not counting the times we went down to the surf for a change, and oh! lots of things—and come to eleven days later on May 12th, 1916, by the U. S. Standard calendar.

For that was my birthday, though I did not tell that to anybody. You get sore, and it's no joke after about the third one pounds you fourteen times and "one for good luck" between the shoulders. And there were five others on Cobra Island besides myself.

After breakfast, when we all turned K. P. and had our camp looking as dressy as a scout camp on inspection, or, myself on the way to church Sundays, Captain Bookie said he and Brown Jim, the serang, and Rama would explore that central hill.

When he told that, I looked at his mouth—it shut like an oyster's shell—one look and I knew there was no use arguing. You know that straight line mouth, parents, teachers, and

the umpire put on when there is no appeal. So I nudged Ivan Williams and frowned on Visitatio, and none of us kicked out loud. You might as well kick at that Gibraltar rock or the Supreme Court, when it handed down a decision, as try and argue with that make of mouth.

After the three had disappeared beyond the rocks by the falls, and we all were feeling grouchy at being sort of interned, when we wanted the worst way to see what Cobra Island had to show, I finally remembered it was my birthday and a scout is cheerful and I tried to register a smile. Now, sometimes, that is harder than getting tar off your hands. This was one of those times, but soon as it came easy, I had an idea.

I saw all that water tumbling over the rocks at the foot of the pool. You know, I told you the pool drained off into this rapids and, maybe fifty yards down, disappeared over another little falls down by the beach and the Indian Ocean. I had always wanted to shoot those rapids and when I told Ivy and Viz, they brightened a whole lot.

I soon started to hunt for the channel, 'cause those two held back, afraid of bumping rocks. I went down a couple of times and learnt the way. Then I yelled out to the others the directions: "All you have to do is lie back, put your ears under and your toes out of the water

and then the current gets under you and raises you up till you do not draw more than three inches, and away you go. See?"

Ivan caught the idea, but Viz would always get scared. You know, as a swimmer, he'd make a good anchor. He would sit up and, of course, draw too much and get stuck and the water would not stop and he would bump hard. So after he had his teeth rattled a bit he quit and sat on a dry rock, watching us shoot through those rapids.

The decent course was to the right and we named it Pearl Elbow Channel, 'cause the water there looked that color and you were swung around a point like a crooked elbow. The only bother was at the fall's end, where you had to stop and bear-walk over slippery rocks back to the trail.

Ivan Williams and I had done them about ten times, and we were feeling a bit winded, 'cause shooting rapids is strenuous, when I suggested to try a new stunt and go down head first.

So I took a header and plunged and, gee! didn't I go! I saw the palm trunks sail by and I wasn't looking much ahead, and right then, in front of me, what I thought was a piece of glistening wood, wiggled away! Gosh! I had not seen that water snake at all and I rolled over and over to put No Man's Water between him and me.

The next I knew the push of the current became a mighty big pull and I was beyond the further end of Pearl Elbow Channel and gliding in that smooth glassy sheet of water just above the falls. Everything rocky was soapy and I could not get a purchase with foot or hand, though I tried hard enough. I must have kicked out on the edge, or the water sent me spinning, for I sailed right out straight and then down, down and instead of hitting rocks, which might have been messy, I lit into the lower pool at the foot of those falls. I'll confess I had not the faintest intention of doing that circus stunt and I would not do it again for all the ice cream I could eat in a week, but when I came up there were Ivan and Visitatio high up by the end of the rapids and they cheered me.

I found out they thought I had done it on purpose and "a scout is kind." He does not like to hurt folk's opinions, so I let them think so. But you know the honest truth.

I climbed back to our little half moon beach and we rested a bit, while I listened to Ivan and Viz describe that flying circle I had made in the air.

Then when my wind came decently, Visitatio De Souza said sadly: "Frank Gaze, I wish I could swim like you." And he sighed.

I remembered how he used to paddle and splash a few strokes in that wading pond end

of our pool, but he never seemed to learn any further, and so he was missing all the real fun. Ivan and I had all the time.

Here was my daily good turn! Now I can swim dandy. So I called out: "Say, Viz, do you really want to keep away from getting drowned? Honest?"

He said: "Yes, Scouty."

Then I hit him a crack on the back and told him: "We'll have lesson number one now. I'm beginning to feel hungry, so it's late enough after breakfast, that's sure."

Of course, we did not count shooting the rapids, swimming, for the water was too shoal. And my unexpected dive over that old falls was only an accident.

So, first, we squatted down Buddha statue style, and I told Viz principles, and, later, made him do them on the sand.

Ivan sat there listening and eating a plantain and saying nothing. But, finally, he broke into my instructions, and I had to say: "Beat it." That's all I said, honestly, but he got huffy, like a regular sissy. You know how some fellows are. So, then, I told him good and he trailed off towards Monkey Falls, whistling "Keep the Home Fires Burning" in a mournful key. It's a wonder they didn't go out—those homes fires.

Then Viz and I went into the water and I made him do the Open Hatch Dive. You

know, squat under the water with your eyes, ears and mouth open all the while. That was to show he had confidence in me.

Next I taught him Dead Man's Float. It's easy; just stand still, hands front, and push off and glide like a log in the current. At first, he did it successfully—not. If it had been a homework paper, my teacher might have charitably given him 40 on that work. But Viz was anxious and in no time, I'd have marked him 80 and 85 on his Dead Man's Float.

Then when he had confidence of gliding ten or fifteen feet through the water without having one foot dragging on the bottom like a shifting anchor, I showed him the correct breast stroke—out, sweep, close—and made him do that twice at the end of each Dead Man's Float.

Viz surely did have a way of picking up swimming knowledge as soon as he was not afraid of getting off the bottom, and I was just going to look for a frog to give him a live demonstration of the right kick, when Ivan started yelling to us from the Monkey Falls' end of the pool.

We stopped and looked and there was Ivan throwing cocoanuts and stones at a branch that overhung the pool, and jumping around and yelling like he had been stung good by a scorpion.

Viz said: "Look at that bally little ass.

There must be some animal on that branch."

And I ordered: "You go ashore and get my scout knife out of my pants and come around by the shore. I'm going to swim across. Maybe, it's another goat or a snake." I started to crawl fast as I could towards Williams' end of the pool.

As a got nearer, I saw Ivan hit the animal, or whatever it was on the branch, and the next second it seemed like the animal parted in two pieces, 'cause one piece came flying at Ivan and a smaller piece dropped with a splash into the water ahead of me. I noticed Ivy beat a strategic retreat into Visitatio's arms, and then I saw ahead of me, what was in the water lay stunned.

I swam up slowly and treaded water, 'cause I wanted to know definitely what it was before I closed.

Then I saw it was no goat, but a live baby animal and the drop from the limb must have killed it, for it lay like asleep; all huddled up. I thought at first it was a young mongoose, and as I did not know whether they bite or not, I swam up gingerly. Anyway, you never want to let a wild animal clamber up on you in the water, even a tame one is bad enough. Why! once, down at Coney, my "Pilot"—but that is not this story. Only I'll say this. That scratch of his claws took me one month to heal up. And he didn't mean it at all.

Anyway, this thing was stunned near dead. Then I reached and touched it, and turned it face up. It was a real live baby monkey, smaller than the one in that Major Smith's bungalow at Singapore.

I'll say right here, it was a little beauty, and cute as anything. So I slung it around my neck and turned with the current. First I knew, a weak little paw just faintly closed on my right ear, which was uppermost, as I was swimming on my side, and the next second there was a tiny cough, and the baby had sneezed into my ear. That tickled, but it was encouraging. Any Natural History will tell you that dying baby monks do not sneeze, only recovering ones.

So I turned on my back and shifted the rescued monk to my breast and kicked out for our camp beach. Ivan and Visitatio were racing along the shore and shouting directions to me. As if I did not know what to do!

When I grounded, they were a Reception Committee and Red Cross Nurses' Unit combined, and I was glad to let them have the little patient, for the swim against the current and back had not brought me second wind.

Ivy shouted he had seen the mother and how she had come sailing at him when her child fell into the water and then how he and Viz cocoanutted—I guess that's the verb, though I do not believe my teacher would

stand for it in English Composition—had cocoanutted her away. I was not interested much, for this was *a* pet, but weak as a kitten that's been half drowned, and about the size of one; only smaller.

Ivan had a bright idea, when he saw it shivering. "I say, the beggar is cold." And Viz said nothing but raced to the place where we had cooked breakfast and began lighting a fire. That was practical, and we all followed him. Ivan found my slip-on and wrapped the monk in it, and that, and the nice heat, soon had that baby up and taking notice.

And, right now, I want to say, it was not a bit scared of three boys and that ought to show how innocent it was. I always thought monkeys, even little tiny children ones, were suspicious of us, but maybe, being born and raised on a desolate palm island in the Indian Ocean makes a difference in monks. Anyway, the monkeys in the New York Zoo do not trust any boys. I don't blame them, either. Why! I remember one afternoon in the Bronx, when Mousie Moran tried to give one an empty peanut shell, the little beggar reached and nipped him badly. "Gratitude, huh!" said Mousie.

Ivan's mother must have let him keep monkeys, or something, for he knew their taste and he broke off a tiny plantain, about the size of my little finger when I was ten, and he half

peeled it and that monk babe reached out, just as politely as my sister would when company's at the table, and took it.

Then Viz wanted to feed it and Ivan said sharply: "No; mind out, man. Do you want it to die?" And Visitatio said: "It's my monkey, because it likes me, and didn't I get it?"

I broke in: "How come! Why, if it wasn't for me, it would have been drowned dead. Didn't I rescue it? It's mine."

Gee! Visitatio had the nerve to say: "Didn't I dry it and feed it and save its life? It's mine."

And he started to walk off with the baby. That made Ivan mad, right there, and I was not feeling any too arctic. The nerve of that Visitatio De Souza!

I saw Ivan make a grab for the monk in Visitatio's arms and the next moment, Viz up and let him have a crack on the cheek. I heard that sound above the fall of the falls.

Then Ivan said to Visitatio: "You're a howling cad." And Visitatio said to Ivan: "You're a blazing funk!" And Ivan retorted: "You're a little loathsome torf!"

Now I don't know yet what that is, 'cause I speak American, not English, but all the same, I'd let nobody call me that and get away with it. So the fight started good right there on our beach.

I came up intending to save the monkey,

which was choking and not enjoying the rain of blows and swings and kicks and, honestly, I did not mean to get into it then.

Viz had a little disadvantage, for he was still holding the cause of the scrap with his left hand tightly by the neck—I guess that must have been why it was choking—and using his right and both legs occasionally. You know, brown chaps fight like Frenchies.

Then as I reached and tried to grab the monk, which was clawing and trying its baby best to get air, a blow landed on my jaw, that hurt like the mischief.

Right then and there and now, it became a three-cornered international scrap. Nobody, whether Asian or English is going to strike an American for nothing and get away with it. And, anyway, my motives were high, as a scout's should be in a fight. I wanted to save life, for that baby monk was strangling. So I sailed in.

I know I reached Ivan's nose, but I am not sure just which of them made my left eye start to close.

Then we three fell together and it was catch as catch can. Visitatio had hold of Ivan's hair and somebody was kicking me in the shins and it hurt like the deuce where I had scraped that coral coming ashore, and I was whaling somebody else, only I could not see clearly, for somebody was lying across my head.

I had completely forgotten the monkey, only I think once it fell on me, 'cause the squeal did not sound like either Visitatio's or Ivan's.

Finally, we three seemed to lose all wind at about one and the same time, and we just lay like the boy figures in that statue group, which they call "La Raccoon," or something, must have looked after the snakes poisoned them all.

I heard Ivan sobbing and Visitatio was gasping just like a fish flopping on the bottom of a rowboat, when you have unhooked him.

I do not believe any one of us was thinking of the baby monk—it was lost somewhere in the tangle under one of us three—when there was a kind of a wild cat or hand grenade dropped out of the banian tree overhead.

It fell plop on my chest and I heard Ivan shriek just like a girl does when you hold a wiggling snake before her. And that baby monk made a little cry that I swear was "Mama" in Monkeyese, and Mother distinctly said, "Come, my precious." The next I knew the mother and my baby monkey, that I had rescued, were trailing off down the beach, and the little monk had a strangle hold of its maternal parent's neck.

Both disappeared back of leaves, and Visitatio hit it, when he said: "I say, man, that was a Pyrrhic victory."

I knew what he meant, 'cause I had had that in Ancient History, and it means a victory in

which the victor is conquered, if you understand what I mean.

Then Ivan laughed and soon we all forgot the scrap and went down to the water's edge to wash off and wash up. And I had to bathe my left eye and wished I could lay my hands on a piece of beefsteak. I would have tried goat's steak, only—a scout is cautious—and I did not like to experiment on my own eye.

Then we fooled around a bit and I taught them the Indian war-whoop. Later, we felt tired and did not hear anything till Cap Bookie returned and told us, as far as their exploring trip showed, the island was as deserted as an amusement park in mid-winter.

But Brown Jim had discovered something that showed natives had once lived on Cobra Island, and that was a six-inch stone, chipped like a sitting idol, only it was worn away like it had been lying in a rapids since the days of St. Francis Xavier.

Cap Bookie was nice. He did not jaw about fighting, but he was awfully interested and made each of us tell about the scrap and he laughed a lot.

After supper, we turned in early that birthday night, but Ivy and Viz were asleep before me.

Happy Birthday! Yeh! To go and lose that nice baby monk!

CHAPTER VIII

I'M ANTI-COBRA FOR LIFE

THERE are some fellows who have the knack of knowing when something sad is about to happen to them. It's like they have eyes to see the shadows of what will be soon. Do you understand what I mean?

Now, there was Narrow Allen, who is a fellow Cobra in my patrol at Brooklyn. Take, for instance, that time before regular scout meeting, when we were rough-housing and waiting for Father Tumulty. Narrow said that last night in bed he dreamt he was falling, maybe, a million feet and he just knew it had some connection with something and he had been expecting it all day. And he did not have to wait much longer, for, coming home with Mousie Moran and me at Ocean Avenue he dodged a trolley and a "Fierce-Arrow"—that's what our patrol calls those little Detroit flivvers—coming along the other way, bumped him hard and broke two ribs. They took him free in the ambulance to the Coney Island Hospital and I went along with him, hitching behind, 'cause I knew the doctor.

Now I'm not that way. I haven't any foresight. Why! if any ouija boarder—'course,

I'm a Catholic and would not have anything to do with that devil writing table—but if anybody else, who does not mind fooling with Mr. Lucifer & Co. was to tell me, when Brown Jim and I left camp, that was going to be a most eventful day in my life, I think I'd have laughed out loud.

The serang had picked me as his companion, 'cause Ivan Williams and De Souza wanted to gather shells on the beach and I didn't. Cap Bookie and Rama were busy building a raft of bamboo, roped with green rattan, so they could keep the chow on it. You know, ants can't swim and that's about the only outdoor sport they don't go in for.

We two skirted the pool and climbed into the gray rocks that are dandy and damp, where the falls come over. It reminded me somewhat of going under Niagara with the guide, only I did not have a rubber rain-coat on, and the serang—well, Brown Jim is Malay or something, and they don't help tailors to pay their income tax much.

As soon as we lost the sound of the falls, we were in a strange jungle; all ferns and speary looking grass and trees with thick leaves overhead and wild cream and yellow and violet colored flowers hung around, like the woods was decorated for a Fifth Avenue wedding. Why! When my cousin Marion married that tall, thin Ensign, she did not have

such scenic decorations, and her father paid \$1,849 for flowers alone. I saw the unpaid bill.

It was still as anything in the jungle, and Jim did not make any more noise than a gold watch, the way he walked. 'Course, I'm a Second Class scout and my scout-master taught me how to stalk. I had learnt a bit too, before that, exploring the pantry, when Katie, our cook, was in the next room. You know.

So, like two shadows, one brown and one freckled, I guess, the serang and I went ahead.

Once I saw a patrol of monkeys, just eight, and they seemed to be playing Skunk Tag, but their patrol leader gave them the signal and they disappeared at a kind of a scout's swing into the maze of branches. There was a baby monkey with them too, and I felt lonely after that lovely one I brought ashore, only Ivan and Viz had to scrap over it, and you know how its mother staged its thrilling rescue.

Then we walked into a parrots' picnic grounds, 'cause they flew up like the house was on fire. I don't like the voice of those little unripe, green parrots. There is something in their tone that sets my teeth on edge, just the same as the needle of an installment-plan phonograph. You know how it maddens you? That way.

We forded a little clear-as-anything stream and we saw a crocodile, or something, asleep

on the further bank. I plugged him on general principles and then I noticed two turtles with long, rubbery necks that made them look like frying pans. Somehow, I felt hungry seeing them that shape.

The serang filled the gourd we had brought along and I carried it, and once more we were in the heart of a jungle, where bamboos grew one side, thick as Sunday crowds at Coney, and the other side of the trail was too dense for anything.

I like to see path all around me when I walk in the woods, and so I trailed in behind Jim and had my both eyes on watch. You never know what you might step on in an Indian Ocean jungle and I did not want to step on anything alive. "A scout is kind," you know, and I had read in Henty or somewhere about tigers that always lie in wait in bamboo, and though we had not seen any signs of a tiger on the island, yet that story came back too vividly and, you know, I suffer from ingrowing imagination.

Then I remembered that when I used to collect stamps there was a series that came from some Malay state and it showed a hungry tiger just parting the jungle grass and looking out for its dinner. Now why do you suppose that stamp picture came back to haunt me then? I can't tell why, but it did.

We came to a sun patch, where the light

came down like down an elevator shaft, and lit the ground up like a spotlight. A strange bird, pearl wings with red feathers and long legs sailed up and away into the further jungle. Brown Jim said he was no good to eat, but I'll bet you a million dollars Sis would have given five dollars easily to have that bird's feathers for her next hat. I can just hear her say, "My! How perfectly sweet!" You know the way girls register joy.

We crossed that open, sunny space and I spotted some myah birds; dark, only white in places, like some one had splashed whitewash at them and it had dried.

We were just going into the jungle shade again, when the serang stiffened up like a brown statue of watchful waiting and, naturally, I did likewise.

There, some twenty yards ahead, was a little goat, no bigger than a collie, only slenderer, and it stood with eyes wide and trembling like it had had chills. But no sound out of it. It did not seem able to do anything but turn like a compass needle towards something we could not see.

Then Jim whispered to me, "Bad snake near, baba." And, sure enough, when that little goat turned again, I saw an ugly, flattened head swaying like a pancake, only it was moving closer and closer to that little goat, which did not seem to know how to run away.

It would only lower its tiny two inch horns and try to buck and the old snake would flow out of reach.

Then I saw the flattened head better and I knew that make of snake, though I had never seen a loose one before out of pictures and the Bronx Zoo.

It was a cobra and maybe as tall as I am.

All at once, while the serang and I watched fascinated, it was the end of the third reel. There was a sharp "Psss-st," that made me icy cold—though I was glad afterwards to have heard my Patrol Call hiss properly given—and that deadly head shot forward like a shell and I saw the little goat stagger and ma-a-ah. The cobra reared and struck home again. Then it disappeared like the film broke and that little goat did not try to run away, or anything.

I had my bamboo staff ready and we came up carefully and stood by, but the poor billie lay down. Brown Jim told me to stand still and watch out. Then he walked, maybe, ten feet further and suddenly I saw the gleam of his knife as it flashed through the sunlight and a grass spot ahead began to toss violently and Jim ran up gingerly.

Then he hit that tossing grass with his staff till it was still. But when he came back and turned over that little goat, it was setting out for its particular Happy Hunting Grounds.

That certainly will always be an object lesson to me of what cobra poison can do.

You know how they yell in the Subway, "Watch Your Step?" Well, I could almost hear that repeated like a litany in my ears as we went along. So, looking modestly down, I was the first to see the ants. It must have been an army division of them and they marched in a fairly dark layer, maybe, three feet wide. They were headed towards where that little goat and that cobra's body lay. We skipped over them respectfully, and went on. I had a feeling I would not want to lie helpless in the advance sector of that ant division. Why! once I heard of a martyr, whom they smeared with honey and tied down in front of ants and—but I better go on.

Where we lunched was a clearing, and through the trees we could see sky and ocean—one blue and dull, the other, blue and sparkling—but no sign of a sail or smoke. I must have looked blue too, for good old Jim started to tell me of a cobra that was discovered aboard the ship he was on once in the Gulf of Siam, and it struck three lascars all in one night and they had to bury them overboard next day, and nobody would go down in the hold of that ship, even to get grub, till the boat got back to Singapore, where the captain had to hire coolies and pay them double to rout out that snake.

Well, that experience of Jim's cured me of

the blues, but it did not make me any less nervous as we squatted there in the shade of a red flowering tree. And no ant came within three nautical yards of me that I did not challenge. You know how it is, when you get thinking about insects and reptiles. You begin to see them almost as good as a man who has the D. T.'s bad.

Then Brown Jim said we had better try our luck again, for he had not brought down any meat yet and it was already afternoon, so we headed into the jungle shade towards the foot of that Cobra Hood hill.

Once we sighted two goats, one white and one black spots and white, but they dashed away before we could get within range and Jim started to run, hoping to get a shot with the automatic.

Then it happened. I heard a sharp crack and the serang sagged down just ahead of me like a sail does when a rope parts in a blow.

Jim moaned and turned face down, and when I knelt at his side, I saw at once he had stepped on something and fixed his ankle. And we were, maybe, four miles from camp!

He was game, was the serang, and he helped me and I tore a piece out of my shirt and made bamboo splints and bandaged his leg. He moaned some but not even a Red Indian could have kept quiet.

Back in Sheepshead Bay I had passed my

Second Class tests, and I'll say that break was bandaged as well as my scout-master could wish.

I looked down and discovered what Jim had tripped over. It was another worn away stone idol, almost the same as Cap Bookie brought back on my birthday. I did a foolish thing for I took it up and pitched it far into the jungle. Oh! if I had only left it there handy to Brown Jim!

Then the serang said, "Water," and I reached for the gourd and found I had spilt all of its contents when the serang fell. So I left Jim comfortable, took the automatic for safety first, and doubled back on our trail, for I remembered where we had forded a clear streamlet, maybe, a quarter of a mile back.

When I stooped to fill the gourd, I heard a slight noise and looked up quickly. There on the opposite bank, with miles of tail wrapped around a limb and, maybe, with three yards coiled down for a drink, was the largest snake I ever saw. It looked like a strip of Oriental rug, yellows and browns and blacks blended. It must have been twenty-five feet easily and any Side Show would have been crazy to buy it. But I remembered I had come on business of mercy, not too look at giant reptiles, so I filled that natural thermos bottle and came back scout's pace to where I had left Jim lying helpless.

When I came near I saw more trouble had happened, for Jim was lying face down and seemed all messed up.

He half lifted his head and yelled at me: "Snake. Snake. Mind out, Frank!"

I cut a long branch of bamboo and cautiously stepped nearer and I spotted—as though I had not seen enough for one day!—a long thick ugly body gliding away with the ease of flowing oil.

Now I got a dandy wing. My regular position is catcher, and I usually nail 'em at second, two times out of five. So I forgot all about the automatic in my belt and reached down for a rock and let that old snake have it. Zip! Bang! I caught him—well, you never know where a snake's neck ends—and so I will say I binged him about a foot below the eyes and he stopped gliding away and started to do the alphabet step.

I closed up as the body was wiggling S.'s and O.'s and S.'s there on the ground and banged him with rocks and that bamboo stick till it broke. Then I saw the spectacles on his head and I knew I had killed a cobra myself.

Brown Jim told me: "Snake come up, maybe, five minutes later you go for water and I see him, Frank." And then he said how it had come on and on and poor old Brown Jim, helpless with his broken ankle, just like that

little goat we had watched in the morning, had had to lie there and see that awful cobra swaying up and over him. Ough! I do not like to think of that even now.

I gave Jim water, holding his head, and then I tried to remember all I knew about snake bites. 'Course, I did all I could, and I made a tourniquet. And then, before I knew it, it was night.

You know how in the tropics dark falls like a brick from the roof, and here was Brown Jim and I far from camp.

I searched my pockets and found a good lone match. Then I gathered grass and branches and made the biggest fire I could, 'cause, after all that snaky day, I did not feel just like camping out all through a black night in that snaky jungle.

I felt Cap Bookie and the others would not sleep much that night and there is one good thing about a fire in the dark. It shows far and they would find us surely.

When it was leaping up and showing shadows on the tall palms, I sat there with Jim and he kept telling me some tale, about when you kill a cobra, kill its mate, or the mate will finish you. Of course, that's straight nonsense, but Jim believed it, I could see, 'cause he's a native and he holds as true a lot of stuff that we don't.

The signal fire light flickered on him, mak-

ing jumpy shadows and that scar on his cheek, that I knew he never got in Sunday School, made him look awfully like a Chinese idol.

Then I remembered I was a Catholic scout and Jim was a poor pagan. I thought of how quickly that little goat went, and then that Brown Jim knew much about gods but not a thing about God.

I gave him another drink and he gazed up in my face gratefully as a spaniel. And he did have brown eyes like one. Then I said: "Jim. Jim, you don't want want to be a pagan any more, do you? You want to be with my God, don't you?"

And Brown Jim said: "Your God, yes, Little Master."

Now I know more about scouting and movies than I do about baptizing, but I thought that was sufficient, and so I took hold of that gourd and tipped it gently. Holding Brown Jim's head I said slowly there in the fire-light, like I remembered hearing in Catechism Class: "I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Somehow it seemed as though Jim smiled when I poured that water on his head, like my patron, St. Francis Xavier had done so often right here in this part of the world. But, maybe, that was only shadows of the fire.

Once a thought came and I whispered to Jim that when he got to Heaven he was to get us

away from Cobra Island soon, and once I heard something rustling by the body of the dead cobra beyond the light and I laid the automatic and my scout-knife, open, alongside me. Then another time a strange animal like a jackal barked up the side of the Cobra Hood hill and some wild pigs crashed nearby and a bat or a flying fox, anyway, something larger than a giant moth, black and swift, sailed in and out of the light. You know how nervous that gets you at night, afraid that fool flying thing will flop right in your face.

Jim did not say much, but gradually stiffened and I threw more dry branches on the fire and I sat there holding his head and easing him and saying my beads on my fingers that Cap Bookie would come quickly.

I must have been tired or something, for I remember looking at Jim and at the fire, which was hot and leaping and the dancing shadows on the silent palms and teak and bamboo all about, and hearing a monkey cough in a tree, and next I knew Cap Bookie and Rama were beside me, and I was still holding the serang's head, only Brown Jim had gone straight to Heaven.

CHAPTER IX

I TAKE AN ANXIOUS HIKE

I WISH I could skip this awful part, but that would not be truthful, and a scout is, you know.

This one started this way. About a week after Brown Jim went to Heaven, when we had had a late swim to cool off, and we were squatted under the stars, Captain Bookie announced that next day, he and Rama and Visitatio De Souza, would start early, as he wanted to climb the Cobra's Hood. From there he could raise some S. O. S. signals that any boat might see and come in to investigate. For we had been almost six weeks ashore now and not a whiff of smoke or steam or anything, except fish, had sailed over the blue rim to seaward. Fruit and goats and pigs and shell-fish are nutritious and romantic and all that, but just about then I'd have traded a cocoanut grove for a nut sundae. And, gee! the memory of that blessed hash, Katie, our cook, always served us Thursday nights in Brooklyn!

I can see them starting out next day, clear as anything. They had gone, maybe, one hundred yards, when Viz came running back, crying: "I say, Frank Gaze, lend me your scout-

knife. I'll feel safer with it and you won't need it in camp."

I was going to refuse, but I remembered my good turn in time and let him have it. I'm always glad I did too. He smiled gratefully and said: "I'll return it surely." And he waved good-bye with his white cap. Ivan and I, standing lonesomely by the silent camp, waved back.

Well, we slicked up things, but there was not much to do, and then Ivan and I dived from the rocks and, later, we played catch with a small cocoanut, only I give up trying to teach a Britisher how to catch properly.

Then we had two or four more swims and some races, and once—it was when we were shooting the rapids in that place we called Pearl Elbow Channel—once we thought we heard shots up on the sides of the Cobra's Hood, but they came faint and dim.

So the afternoon dragged and dragged. Cap Bookie had said they would be back surely by evening, so when it was dark as anything and no return party, Ivan suggested: "Hadn't we better light a bonfire to guide them? And I said, "Sure thing."

It got later and later and finally Ivan and I had a good night dip by moonlight, only the water felt cold and ghostly, and we turned in and it was daylight when next I remembered anything.

All that long, hot day we waited, fooling around the falls and down to the beach for an ocean dip and to gather shells, and at night we lit another, bigger signal fire. But no human answer came out of that island jungle.

The next day, Williams and I talked it all over and we came to the true conclusion that something serious must have happened to the missing three. Then we decided it was up to us to go to their aid.

I was mighty glad I was a scout, even a Second Class, 'cause I had learnt to read signs somewhat. Only I wished that morning I was an eagle and knew better.

Anyway, I knew heaps and piles more about pathfinding than that Ivan Williams did.

We looked back at our camp site, that stood so peacefully there across the wide pool below the falls, with that circle of great still trees beyond it and the little palm-thatched shack that we slept under. It was a picture of outdoors. But I never, never suspected that would be our last look on our island home!

Soon as we turned into the still jungle, I picked up the trail in the soft earth, 'specially Cap Bookie's. You know, if a heavy man wears a size 12 shoe, he leaves marks behind him on everything soft, 'cept rocks and cement.

Their trail led us another way from the direction poor Brown Jim and I had taken ten days ago, and finally we halted for a bite and

a rest somewhere near the foot of the Cobra's Hood. And we had fresh cocoanut milk too.

But neither Ivan nor I cared much for food. The mystery of what had become of our Cap Bookie lay like a blanket on us and left us no appetite. That will tell you how worried we felt.

As we went along again I spotted something and said: "Here's where they had their lunch! See! The crowded footprints and the cold ashes of their fire!"

After that clue we followed an ascending aisle between green walls of thick jungle. You would have needed a knife like they use in a bindery to cut a passage through that snarl of vines and trees and foliage either side of us, and I knew if Cap Bookie came this way, he took this trail we were on.

Beyond, where the jungle was thick and shadowy and lonesome, we experienced the first shock of that shocking day. There suddenly loomed ahead of us a figure, that made Ivan crowd into me.

It was a huge gray statue, maybe, twenty-five feet tall, right there in the middle of that strange jungle, all carved in stone and worn away by the weather. The figure was seated, knees crossed and hands on the lap, like all those idols and natives squat.

The face was sort of human and evil, but it did not have any more American look than a

camel does, and there was a necklace of what I took to be sharks' teeth around the neck. They looked deadly white and grim as barbed wire in No Man's Land.

"It's a great god!" whispered Ivan frightened, but I cried in scorn: "Great fiddlesticks! It's nothing but an ugly old idol! And what's it doing right here in the middle of this jungle!"

Then Ivan called out a new discovery. "Why! see here, Frank!" And I looked and there was a stone-way started from behind that jungle idol. It had been built of some reddish brown stones and was, maybe, fifteen feet across, and the grass and moss grew up between the pieces of stone, but the pathway lay fairly distinctly reddish green ahead.

I imagined that the Cap and his party would investigate this new way.

Sure enough, there were the tell-tale marks on this stone trail, where the grass had been trampled, and that showed that the three had taken it. That find made me glad, for I had successfully tracked them so far. Ivan, who as a scout would not know how to tie a granny, did not know anything about picking up the trail. But that comes from never having played Kim's Game.

Then, as we went along the old stone road, I said: "Ivy, this isn't any desert island, where stone streets and stone idols grow that way."

At that Ivan looked as though he was clouding up.

You win, if you bet that made us more watch-your-stepful as we hiked along. For if there were natives on Cobra Island, that might account for Cap Bookie's disappearance, and I was seeing free movies of a big kettle boiling over and brown cooks in stove-pipe hats jumping around and folks I knew stewing. You know, I'm nervous and imaginative, but I did not tell Ivan my thoughts.

We came to a clearing and we had a James Dandy view of the island to northwest, where we had never yet been. We could see we were, maybe, some hundred feet above the blue smiling still Bay of Bengal. Ivan and I swept that green panorama of Cobra Island like my Ma cleans up the house in the spring time, but we did not see any trace or smoke of our missing party, only a couple of kites or eagles, sailing high overhead, and some goats on a spur of the Hood.

We trekked again and I made the next discovery. The trail led us through dense jungle, either side and close up, only the sky now and then showing blue and blazing high above. Suddenly I stopped in my tracks and picked up my Boy Scout knife that I had lent Visitation. That was proof conclusive—if I needed it—that we were on the right road so far, and they had come this way.'

"Why didn't he come back searching for it?" puzzled Ivan. "It lies here in plain view."

I had my suspicions, but I did not let on to him. And even then I had no suspicion of the horror that lay smiling in the sun ahead of us.

After that we went on up that deadly still old avenue, paved with reddish half-hidden stones, and turned a sharp corner—sharp as turning into another street—and there before us was an oblong opening of the jungle. The sun poured down into it dazzlingly, so that we blinked like coming up out of the Subway on a June afternoon. Many great mighty palms towered up all sides, but what held our eyes were some things different.

Two long rows of stone gray gods, maybe, twenty in a row, all facing at each other, squatted either side that sunny jungled clearing, like still guards of honor. 'Way up at the further end of the idol sentinels against a sheer green shoulder of the Cobra's Hood, was a gleaming stone figure, knees crossed like that big Buddha I saw at Kamakura. Only this was not as large as that Japanese Daibutzu, but a bigger god idol than that first figure in the midst of the jungle we had stumbled on a short while before.

With Ivan, I stood there watching all those gods and we did not say anything for the longest time. It was so still and uncanny that I

said three Hail Marys and told my Guardian Angel to be on his job good. Then I felt better, like I always do.

Now you would naturally expect to see a regular August Sunday Coney Island crowd nosing about all those silent gods, but not a soul that was human was in sight, 'cept us two. And the quiet of that court of gods was like being locked in a vault. We must have stood there at the entrance, looking and looking, like idiots, at those idols for five minutes, or, maybe, half a week, I don't know which.

You know how time goes when you are interested. Why, once, going to school, I watched a man painting a sign high up—but that was another time.

Then I woke up and said to Williams: "Ivy boy, we'll give this fresh air jungle temple an inspection. I've read of such places and they aren't healthy. So advance and mind out! He, being British, says "mind out" when he means "look out," so I talk his lingo when I want him to understand.

We came across that quiet avenue, still like death, in between the two rows of dumb statues. Some of the statues' faces had weathered away, but the others all had that bad look in their countenances, like gunmen, and around the neck of each idol was a necklace of sharks' teeth, only some had become smashed by ancient storms. I said another prayer to my

Guardian Angel as we stepped along. It pays to be prepared—scoutwise and otherwise.

When Ivan Williams and I had come to the upper end of the avenue, we saw that the big statue ahead of us had a moat of marshy water all about it and an old stone archway, with no side rails, led across that water to the base of the big god's statue.

And then I had another electric shock. It almost blinded me by its bright flash, and I cried suddenly: "Ivan, look! In the middle of the forehead. That old god has a real jewel on him or I don't know anything. Look at that whale of a diamond!"

Honest! that sparkler must have been an inch square!

Then I saw the necklace around this idol's neck was not made of sharks' teeth, for the things that were flashing there looked like green fire and red lights in the sunlight. They were jewels, bigger than rich people wear at the opera.

Ivan was awfully excited at seeing those bunches of jewelry and he would have run across that stone bridge to the base of the idol and climbed up, but right then I had a feeling—I can't describe it, but it felt like my Angel was standing in front with outspread wings and preventing me from taking one step forward.

I looked to the right, where there were some

slimy green steps—all worn away by time or feet, that led down into the smooth water.

I saw something that flashed, lying nearby. Thinking of great gems, I took Ivan's arm and we went over to investigate.

There, dropped on the worn stones was Cap Bookie's glasses!

Soon as I spotted them, I said: "Ivan—" Then I stopped, for Ivan was only a scary kiddie and I continued differently. "It's mighty queer. I don't like it worth a cent." But Ivan was not paying much attention to me and my find. His eyes were glued on that big sparkler, stuck in the middle of the forehead of the idol god. It looked so pretty in that quiet sunlight. All twinkling and gleaming and free to take.

Ivan said hurriedly: "Scouty, let's go across that stone bridge and get it. We'll be rich forever."

But, again, I had that feeling of keep off. It came over me, strong as running into a wall and I was going to say: "Let's look for more clues of Cap Bookie and the others. They can't be far."

But Ivan was wildly excited and he yelled: "Come on, man. From the lap of that idol we can reach that big jewel and that pretty necklace. I say, look!" He broke off suddenly and grabbed my arm.

I turned quickly and saw an old nanny come

trotting down the avenue we had just left. It stopped to nibble grass every once in a while and then it came on, its bag wagging from side to side.

"Let's catch her and have some milk. I'm thirsty," cried Ivan with a sudden new idea.

So we circled back quietly and started to creep up closer and closer. It was nibbling the grass in the avenue between the idols and working up towards the marshy moat.

We had come within, maybe, two hundred feet of it, and I was wondering how the deuce we were going to get it, having only our staffs, when it suddenly winded us.

The fool nanny seemed to lose her wits entirely. Maybe, it was not used to seeing anything human, for it bolted dead ahead and right out onto that stone arched bridge that led across to the base of that big jeweled idol.

"Come on quick, Ivy," I directed. "We have her trapped for sure." And I scooted ahead.

The nanny had seen the corner we had her in, for she stopped like a lady in the middle of a crowded street, and then seeing Ivan and me, whooping and coming on like Indians on the warpath, she went ahead. We hot after her.

I never received such an awful shock in all my life, and I'm more than fourteen and big for my age.

But that was once my hair stood up at at-

tention, and my heart quit work, for next second, as the goat galloped onto the center of the solid stone bridge across the moat to the idol, something dropped like a trap door, and the nanny disappeared into the still green water.

There was a good splash. I saw the nanny's head come to the surface and then—Gee! I'll never forget that sight, if I live to be a great, great grandmother! Three long slimy snouts rose like piles driven up by an explosion all around that poor goat. There was one pitiful ma-a-ah, and long tails flashed out of the surface like swords drawn. I saw a sickening cotton-white mouth open, a quick twist, and the water was all whipped white. And more crocodiles, long as torpedoes, were fighting over that meat. The water stained, and then as it quieted, that section of the stone bridge rose slowly and slipped back into place. Water dripped down from it, like from the side of a house during a rain storm.

The moat water was not rippleless any longer, but all long reaching out circles, as crocodile after crocodile awoke and went cruising by, just as grim and silent as destroyers on guard duty.

I found myself clinging to Ivan and he was sobbing something fierce. After a while Ivan said in an awed voice: "Frank, do you suppose Cap Bookie and Viz tried to walk across

that place to get that—" He did not finish for he was hysterical.

I did not like to think what must have taken place the other day below the great idol and its beckoning great jewels. That god was nothing but an horrid old trap, and those gems, bait. But that's what all those pagan idols are, anyway.

Later, we screwed up courage enough to walk cautiously all about that moat, and Ivan saw something white floating in the water back of that devil statue.

I fished out with my staff that floating thing and it was Visitatio's round, white sailor cap. It was ripped dreadfully. I tried not to let Ivan see it, but he recognized it and went all to pieces again.

Going down that still avenue, we looked back only once and, there, beyond the two rows of idols, was that still god, seated out against that deep green jungle background. Its jewels gleamed in the late afternoon sun and in the middle of the forehead, a tiny dazzling white speck. But those cruel jaws just made those gems as safe as though they were locked up in the basement of a bank on Wall Street.

Neither Ivan nor I would have touched one of those cursed jewels then for a million dollars.

We came back to where we had left the trail and entered this old stone road, and, later, we

made camp in a clearing, and though it was warm, we lit a fire just so we would not have to spend the long night in the dark.

I do not think we spoke much, but I knew what Ivan was seeing all night and he knew I was seeing the same. Brave Captain Bookie and good Rama and—Ah! I could not get that torn white cap out of my mind!—poor little Visitatio!

CHAPTER X

I SEE A FIGHT

You know how you sleep late the next morning when you have had great excitement the day before and the alarm does not go off and nobody calls you?

Well, there was our fire, gray-cold and scattered, and Ivan Williams still dreaming, when I opened my eyes. Then like hitting a door in the dark, I remembered all of yesterday: the jeweled idol that was only an old death trap, and the solved mystery of the missing three. So I said my morning prayers a little bit more fervently and, as usual, added an extra special one to my Guardian Angel to tell me the best thing to do. And, right then, I had a strong practical light—breakfast for two, and I was to attend to it.

We still had some cold goat, and fruit—mangoes and things—was handy for the plucking, so I shinned up a cocoanut tree that bent 'way over, like the Japanese bow, and cut off enough for about eight. A scout is prepared, you know, and I do not know any better preparation for an uncertain day than a square breakfast, do you?

Then I put on my scout smile and began to register cheerfulness as I shook Ivan awake.

"It's this way, my son," I said to him, as we ate, "we have to face the fact that you and I, as far as we know, are the entire male and female population of this island, and the best thing to do is to emigrate, or try hard to. Cap Bookie and the others have gone to Heaven, but, remember, he planned to erect a signal on the top of the Cobra's Hood, up there. So what do you say to hiking up to-day?"

Ivan looked as blue as that good new necktie of mine that sunk with the *Khandala*, but he forced a smile and said: "Frank Gaze, you know what's best."

It made me feel old enough to vote to see the way Ivan leaned on me for the future. But then that was as it should be. Wasn't I three months older than him? Anyway, I was a Yank, and it's only natural for foreigners to expect us to do things.

It took us, maybe, two hours steady climbing to near the top of the island hill. Only once we halted at a little spring, that was all flower banked, like a florist's window, and there we refilled our natural thermos bottles and cut down some mangoes.

Then, later, we came out on the plateau that caps the hill. The mass of gray rock, that looked like a cobra in fighting pose from the

ocean, now seemed smooth and rounded like the roof of a shed for Zeppelins.

The view was Jim Dandy. We could see below us the carpet of palm tops, with here and there, as though it was part of the pattern, the scarlet and gold of a certain kind of tree; the border of whitewashed beach with the little pearly lines of each breaking wave, and, beyond the coral reef clear as ivory, the deep blue floor of ocean. 'Way to the eastward, two whales, black and curved, were swimming, and one blew a silver gray jet as we watched. The water fell like in a statue fountain.

Ivan was looking to the southward, when he yelled and dropped those precious glasses, and they almost fell hundreds of feet below, only I saved them.

"Smoke! I say, man, there's the smoke of a ship there! Look, look, young Gaze!"

I put up the glasses and swept that southern horizon, and, sure enough, there was the most welcome sight—'cept eats, of course—I had yet seen on Cobra Island.

Ivan was dancing about happily, like a scorpion had stung him. He does not usually show his feelings, being British, but he was acting Yankee and natural this once. He shouted like I was deaf: "Frank, Frank, will they rescue us? Oh! will they, Frank! Do you think so, Frank? Say so, please!"

I gave him a pitying look and told him:

"Yes; if we signal them to stop and they are in the habit of making a landing on this populous island. Apart from these slight things, I fear not, son."

But, anyway, smoke is smoke, and that's something. It was the first sign of the outside world we had seen since the loss of the old *Khandala*, which seemed to have happened years and decades and eons—if that's the word for bunches of centuries—ago.

So we hunkered down there on the edge of the plateau and took turns looking through the glasses and trying to wish that unknown steamer towards us.

I figured if I tied Ivan's shirt to what was left of mine, and fastened both to one of the palms that grew in a small grove by the northern end of the plateau, that would make some sort of a signal, and if they swept the island from the bridge they might stop to investigate. Oh! I wished Cap Bookie and the serang or Rama were there. They'd have known. Then I thought of a bonfire, but Ivan and I had used our last match last night, and I knew there were some at our camp but it would take a day to get down there and climb back.

The shirt S. O. S. signal did not look so bad, and, anyway, Ivan's shirt, but mostly mine, was about on its last legs. I know what my Ma would have said, even if I was boarding on a deserted island, if she could have seen that

frayed shirt of mine: "Francis, dear, you're a disgrace. Go right upstairs and change at once." Oh, gee! if Ma only could have given me that scolding then!

Well, thoughts like that were not getting us young castaways anywhere. Ivan just sat there with those glasses glued to his eyes. It seemed to give him comfort.

Finally, he declared: "Scouty, she's no passenger boat. She's—but have a look."

When I had put those glasses on her, I could see her masts with bulges on them like fighting tops, but what I noticed most was the speed she was making. She was headed for this island and coming on like my dog, "Pilot," does when he hears me whistling, or sees cats, he thinks he can lick.

But I knew it was time to prepare that "Please-stop-and-pick-up-us-two-poor-boys" signal.

Ivan and I hiked across that plateau. It was all yellow grass, dried dead in that fierce sun, and some glaring stones, on one of which coiled a cobra asleep, but we did not bother waking him this time.

I was ahead when we reached the northern side and I saw them first. Low and blue hazy on the northern horizon showed three islands!

I almost fell over the brink of the plateau and took a header a thousand feet down to the

next stopping place. But, instead, I grabbed Ivan and pointed.

But he had looked below and he shouted out loud. No wonder! For there far below us was the clear cut outline of the northern shore of our island, stringing out like the tail of a scorpion. The deep thick green blanket of millions of palms and teak and bamboo, and the lacy white fringe of the snowy sands, all stood out sharp and map-like as seen from an airplane.

But we were not interested in the outline of our island, for right there, below us was the great curve of a vase-shaped bay, and, anchored in the center of it, was a three-funneled vessel, long and lean, and, maybe, a hundred sailors in white were busy repainting her; some from scaffolding let down her sides, and others in tiny toy boats alongside.

The big vessel was a cruiser. You could see that at the first glance—her twin guns, fore and aft, and the style of her masts and her trim lines.

But what I noticed most was that the flag on her stern was neither British nor Allied nor Neutral colors!

Out to sea, off the two woody capes that made the bay's entrance, was a launch steaming lazily about with white clad sailors in her, and the occasional blinding flash of steel forward showed a gun mounted there.

Ivan would have shouted, only I put my hand over his mouth and dragged him back from the edge. For I had an idea.

We had almost completely forgotten the World War. You know how it is, if your house burns down early one morning, you get so interested that you forget to read yesterday's results, even though the World's Series are going on, and the Dodgers or the Giants are in it. Well, that's how the recent big personal happenings on Cobra Island had made us forget the Big Scrap.

But, when that idea came, I right then and there would have bet any one, ten to one, that I could tell the business and the nationality of the smoke pouring over the southern horizon.

I knew that launch on watch could not as yet see the horizon as we up on the Cobra's Hood could, but they must have smelt something smoky about this time, for a gun was fired from the launch and a signal man started to wig-wag. The launch circled and began to race in towards the blue bay far below us.

Up from the bay came the clear notes of a bugle and there was the report of a gun and a little white puff floated out from the side of the cruiser and drifted aft and away.

I put the glasses on her and could see sailors running to quarters on her decks and others were casting off the tiny boats and scaffolding that were alongside.

There was a beach party suddenly appeared on the shore and I saw them running on the sands like ants on a plate, towards their boat and begin launching her into the surf.

Pretty soon smoke began to pour from all three funnels and the big boat swung and put to sea, leaving a whitish curved wake on the bay's blue surface. She did not wait to pick up that beach party, which was half way out to her.

Then I saw an inspiring thing. The cruiser broke out her battle flags from her masts and she headed straight out between the narrow capes and into the open ocean and steamed south. She did not even stop to pick up that launch that I had seen on watch.

We took up a position on the eastern side of the plateau and I said to Ivan: "Son, we're in an angel-view grandstand to see this fight, and don't you forget it." For from the Cobra's Hood we commanded the horizon in three directions for miles and miles, and I knew firing would begin long before either ship could drop below our horizon.

That vessel coming from the south must have eaten up the knots, for almost in no time, when I had the glasses on the surprised boat, I saw a great fountain of water rise up like a gigantic icicle thrust up from the bottom of the sea in front of her, and seconds later there came a heavy boom.

Ivan was all excitement and began to hop about like he had stepped barefooted on a camp-fire or something sharp.

Then I saw a cloud of smoke and flame belch from a forward gun. There came up to us a crash, and birds—I never knew there were so many on the island—began to fly up all along the coast and circle in crazy circles, shrieking blue murder. They must have been pacifists or something.

Those two peaceful whales, that had been sporting and blowing to each other, submerged and when they broke surface again, they were headed into the east, like their mother or father was calling them, and meant it.

Then away to the right around the edge of the plateau, that had hid it from our position before, came the upper riggings and the smoke of that other boat, and the firing became what you might call general.

I never knew our island had been so quiet and suburban, till Ivan and I sat in at that fight. Noise! gee! Ivan had to shout to be heard and so did I, and, finally, we both stood there, looking and looking, while our ears rang.

The day was gloriously clear and those two whales were tiny black spots, showing and disappearing, but, you bet, going all the time into the east.

Then, all at once, thick smoke enveloped the boat that had put out from the bay and I saw

the forward mast just sort of dissolve and it wasn't any more.

I knew there had been sailors up there and all of a sudden the fight did not seem so exciting. And I reached my hands into my pockets and began to say Hail Marys for those poor fellows, who had been in that fighting top.

The boat against the southern horizon must have gotten the range for when next Ivan gave me my turn with the glasses, and I brought the nearer boat up close, I saw that, besides the smashed forward mast, the middle of the three funnels lay like a broken straw across the deck and smoke and steam poured up from the ragged bit left upright. The bridge looked like twisted wire and flames were beginning to lick up through much smoke, gray and black.

Then I saw this wounded boat swing in a great circle and head back for our island. She was still firing gamely from her aft turrets, but I knew she knew she was beaten.

All the while the other boat kept coming on and coming on, firing through thick smoke that hid most of her and miles of the horizon.

I searched again, but those two whales had put the eastern horizon between them and the fight by now. They must have been off Singapore, but I bet you they did not stop till they hit the open Pacific.

When the enemy boat was off the bay entrance, there was some explosion aft and little

black bits sailed out like opening a fan and after that only one gun kept firing irregularly. I hoped she would make the shore, for she was listing to port badly now and looked just disreputable—not a bit like the trim cruiser that had steamed out of that bay less than an hour ago. General Sherman said it! I'll say he did!

Another funnel had gone and the one left had a whole quarter of its top ripped off and looked to me like our drain pipe from the roof of our Sheepshead Bay home did once after it was struck by lightning.

A forward turret was lying on its side and the gun was sticking right up like they were aiming at the sun. Smoke, like waving plumes, was coming out of strange places. You could see how low she was even without the glasses.

After that there was no firing from the British cruiser, but she started to draw in to the land fast. All her guns trained on that wreck.

It was terribly still after all that battle noise, only some birds still screaming.

Ivan and I had not spoken for a long while, but just stayed with our mouths open like you do at exciting movies. And this had been the most exciting real movie I had ever, ever seen.

Then I hit Ivy on the back and he said: "Ouch!" like he meant it and I told him: "Son, we're going to be rescued and there's our res-

cuer coming in now." I pointed to the victorious cruiser.

But just then there came a noise like an earthquake and an explosion and slamming the front door at 2 A. M. all rolled into one, and we both shook and fell to the ground.

When we looked over the edge of the plateau and down to the bay again, that enemy boat just about had gone to pieces. It was like some giant had been imprisoned in the hold and he had gotten tired of his cramped quarters and rose up. Thick greasy smoke and long hungry flames and white steam clouds blotted out that boat and when the smoke screen drifted to leeward and hid the palm fringe on the far shore, it showed that wreck again, and its own mother would not have recognized that poor boat. It was just twisted steel, bent like it had been in mortal agony. Through the glasses I could see poor specks leaping into the sea and then in the water I saw other specks, clinging to bits of that discarded scaffolding and wreckage. Then I saw splashings and black fins coming and—I would not let Ivan look any more. He's too young.

But I put the glasses on that British cruiser and I received the shock of my life. She was not headed in now, but had swung off to the north and there, for the first time I saw, faint and dim, a new smoke blur on that horizon, between two of those distant islands.

That awful feeling of being left behind took possession of me, but I crushed it down, knowing more important business than our immediate delivery demanded attention. We might have been abandoned, but I realized, whether or not that cruiser ever came back to pick us up, Ivan and I were needed down there on that beach, where two well boys could be of aid to some of those wounded. So I said to Ivan: "Old man, our place is down there and it will take us hours, maybe, till to-morrow, to get there, but we just have to."

So I took rough bearings. We had to go down the strange side of the Cobra's Hood, but, thank goodness, I had my pocket compass and was a scout.

We lost sight of the bay completely soon as we started down. Again we heard another deep and rumbling explosion. Then it was midnight still and those birds began to come back.

We saw many goats, but they were not stopping, just running crazy, and I bet you they have not learnt yet that the fight is over.

We came to a jungle-edged stream, thirty yards across. Neither Ivan nor I liked strange smooth waters after what we had seen at the base of that jeweled idol's statue, but I blessed myself and told Ivan to stay there or come on. And we waded and swam across and nothing rose up, but my heart was going bang, bang,

like an hydraulic hammer, as I splashed up the other shore. Gee! I bet Ivan's was beating a runaway airplane engine's.

Then once, we saw, maybe, ten peacocks and a great snake, yards long, and thick like a Coney Island bouncer's arm, but we did not stop—just hurried down, and the surprises we found on the shore of the bay properly belong to the next chapter, so I'll just quit here and now. Though I can't help wondering when those two whales stopped racing away. I bet you their hearts are yet going bang, bang, bang.

CHAPTER XI

I GET CAPTURED TWICE

WHEN we did finally break out of the everlasting tangled jungle, I put the glasses on that battered-up boat, and she showed she had come out number two in that scrap of yesterday. All I could make out was snarled junk above the blue waves.

But a more welcome sight was there. That British cruiser had changed her mind about chasing smoke to the northward and about two miles off was standing by.

We were coming around a tangled point, at scout's pace, where a fair sized stream flowed between pinkish rocks into the ocean, and we had lost sight of the two war boats, when Ivan tackled me.

Naturally I yelled: "What's the matter with you now?" But he only said in a frightened whisper: "Look, man." And I did and there ahead of us, maybe, a hundred yards off, was a yellow-haired sailor with a gun. His back was to us and it was mighty lucky Ivan had pulled me down. For partly hidden in the jungle grass of the stream beyond the sentry was a long cutter and it had a gun mounted

forward. I recognized it at once as the scout boat I had seen yesterday off the mouth of the bay.

You bet we snaked away and then squatted under a plantain for a consultation. Finally, I decided that Ivan Williams, being British, should lie hidden here in the jungle.

Then I started ahead, not knowing what was ahead of me. That's the way I usually go ahead. But, gee! whiz! how else is a fellow to go ahead? "I pause for a reply," as it says in a piece I once had to learn at the Prep for Elocution, and I got stuck just after that sentence, 'cause Mousie Moran made a funny face at me from the audience and, finally, Father Hungerford told me I had paused long enough and to sit down, which I did gladly, only getting into my seat I sort of accidentally on purpose stepped on Mousie and he yelled and Father Hungerford made him stand out.

Well, a funny thing happened. I must have been going about half an hour and it was still as the night before Christmas, when I heard a coughing overhead. I looked up quickly and there in a low palm was a mother monkey and the cutest little baby monk playing in the branches about her.

I forgot I was a Red Indian stalking blond enemies in watching that babe. He seemed to think his ma's tail was his skip rope and he'd grab it and hop over it, just like a kitten does

if you tease it with your necktie. You know.

Once he missed and would have fallen. He grabbed that tail and hung on for dear life. He gave the funniest little squeal, and I laughed out loud and honest.

Then a gruff voice, that I had not seen at all, and it had not seen me, I guess, until I had laughed, shouted something at me, and I forgot those monkey tricks, for I was looking into the black tunnel of a rifle. And that rifle was held by a sailor more than fifty feet ahead of me.

You bet I put my hands up in the best style, like I had seen in the illustrated papers, and I yelled one of the few German words I knew, "Comrade! Comrade!"

The sentry lowered his 8"-looking gun and motioned me to advance. He said something else, but I did not know the countersign, as I had taken French at the Prep. Anyway, he seemed surprised. You'd think I was a cave boy, or a brother of Abel, or something equally rough. I did need a hair-cut though, and I did not have my Sunday suit on.

The sailor took me by the ear and it hurt too, and he led me at once to a gray-whiskered officer, seated on a camp-stool.

That officer knew something, 'cause he said in good language: "Where did you come from, boy?"

Two other officers, one stern and one nice,

came over, and, maybe, twenty sailors watched at a distance.

Then the Third Degree began.

All the time they were talking, I had whiffs from the cook tent. And that odor, when I had had only fruit for breakfast, was so distracting that I had to look the other way.

Those officers kept questions going like in an oral exam, and I tried to tell them just as much as I wanted to and no more.

Finally, that stern looking officer, who seemed to be in command of this party hidden in the jungle, said: "You are a British boy." I told him politely: "Pardon, sir, but I was born in New York City, though I have lived in other parts of God's Country."

Then the nice officer did a funny thing. He walked off a bit, stooped, and suddenly picked up a small cocoanut, no bigger than a baseball. He faced me and called out: "Here, son, put'm out at home." And he lined it in.

Without thinking I braced my legs and stretched my hands to receive a throw home and put the ball on the runner. I'll say that run would not have counted, unless the Ump was crooked.

That nice officer laughed and said: "Yes; he's native born Yankee, all right. That was as neat as I've seen at the Polo Grounds." And he must have translated that, 'cause the stern looking one nodded his head gravely. I

wonder how he knew from that simple thing though!

Then I told them right out that I wanted to get out to that cruiser and be taken off the island. And the pleasant looking officer laughed again, like that was a good joke, and he supposed I thought they would row me out to that cruiser.

But I said in desperation: "I hope you invite me to have some hot doggies, cooking over there first."

When the nice officer translated this, that stern one gave some orders. I did not get their sense, but I was taken in tow by a young sailor with a Teddy-bear hair-cut, named Oscar. He spoke my tongue and within ten minutes I found out he had once been a carpenter at the Steeplechase, Coney Island. He knew at least two men I knew there. One sold tickets at the Horses, and the other was in the Dance Hall Orchestra. He could play the drum like an angel.

Well, when Oscar learnt that I knew friends of his, he borrowed a white shirt from one of the smallest of the sailors and gave it to me. Then he led me where I most wanted to go.

They gave me a great meal, and cookie, who didn't know how to speak American at all, though he was a man and fat—had a second cousin, who lived in Milwaukee and through Oscar he wanted to know if I had ever met him.

That opened the gates, and Oscar became quite chummy and talked. For he told me they were healthy survivors of the *Von Roon*, that was the name of the battered cruiser—and they planned to get away in that cutter of theirs after the British left, and capture a boat and turn her into another raider, or work up the Arabian Coast and into Turkish territory.

I listened like a Dictograph, and in the mean time, I figured they would not want Ivan or me along on that trip.

Oscar, for all his chumminess, clung around like a leech all the rest of that morning and he evidently had strict orders to chaperon little me.

Dinner came. Honest! You have to live on canned goods and fresh fish or fruit or goat for six weeks to appreciate real cooked chow, cooked by a Dutch chef who knows his business like Dad knows movies.

Then the whole party got out their pipes and smoked and smoked and it got hotter and drowsier—like it always does in the afternoon in that steam-heated latitude—and they turned in for a siesta.

Oscar and I lay down by the bank of that stream, where it was somewhat cool, and I had to fight and say Hail Marys to keep awake. I saw Oscar was going off, so I pretended sleep and even to snore, which I never do really. I don't believe in it. Finally, Oscar joined me,

only his were not make believe. They were 100%. You know, when a fat man with no neck much to speak of sleeps on his back. That kind.

It helped me to think of my experiences on the *Khandala* and I did not care to help another raider party, even negatively, so I counted the noises the little green parrots made till I must have gotten up into compound fractions, and then I heard Oscar registering deep sleep. No sham there. It was the genuine article. I turned over gently as a tree grows. Then I rolled over some more. Happily, the ground was sandy and not creaky like old boards or new shoes.

And right here my Guardian Angel did his bit. For the thought came, "You big idiot! Run for it. These people won't dare to fire a shot for fear of attracting the attention of the Britishers out in the bay."

I got to my feet at that and "bunked," as Ivan would say.

A voice—I guess it was a sentry—challenged me sharply. He must have yelled "Halt!" but not speaking his language I interpreted it as "Scoot for the jungle."

I wish some scout official had put a watch on those last twenty yards of mine. It would have been, not a world's, but a universe's junior amateur record!

Once within the thick jungle, I waited till

my heart quieted down a couple of hundred beats a minute, and I could hear only the regular jungle sounds. Then I made a big Sign of the Cross and started.

I forded that stream higher up and then I laid a course for where I had left Ivan Williams, and when I had worked to the other side of the bay again, I saw some baby monks and their ma or nurse with them. But this time I did not halt. I'll try anything once.

Ivan was almighty glad to see me and threw his arms around my shoulders, and that's going some for an Anglo-Saxon boy. Thank Heavens he wasn't a Frenchy! They kiss awfully and for nothing too. Why, once in Shanghai, I saw two full blooming Frenchmen meet—but that's just in passing.

I told Ivan quickly and we went into council on the way and I decided the best thing to do would be to get to the southern cape of the bay at once.

So we scout-paced along and Ivy kept asking me what I had had to eat in the camp and I told him the menu and I saw he liked to hear that. So I added a few delicacies that I would have liked and he began to sniffle. I asked him what was the matter now, and he said, "Oh! it was just nothing." I changed the subject and we talked how we would hail that cruiser. You know, it was not as easy as calling a taxi.

I saw what I wanted and I cut off a bamboo

which grew just right and I slipped out of that white shirt Oscar had lent me and tied it to the end of the pole by the arms. It made a good enough emergency signal flag.

I practiced up a bit on my alphabet going along. But signaling to a scout is like riding a bicycle or serving Mass or first swim again in the good old summer time. You think you don't know it and soon as you need it, it comes all back. Jiminy! I wish candy or ice cream cones were that way, but they aren't, and that's a fact.

Well, we got to the point and it was about time we did too, for no sooner did we climb out on the rock, from where we could see the bay and the wreck again, than we saw that long British cruiser, maybe, a mile off and steaming slowly to pass our point and put to sea.

I had forgotten to plan what message I would signal, but I told Ivy to keep quiet as I wanted to think. Then I made up my sentence and when the cruiser was abeam, I ordered: "Here goes, Ivan, and you yell like—like you meant it."

He shouted generously and I stood out prominently and began to call with my shirt flag.

Gee! it seemed almost before Ivan had to stop for breath, that a signaler answered me on the bridge, and Ivan said a group of officers had their glasses on me.

Now was my time and I said under my breath, "Angel, help me do these letters good."

Then I spelt slowly with that shirt signal flag, "Have important information enemy plans."

It was acknowledged at once.

Thank goodness I did not forget any of those letters, but if I had had to use a "q" or a "k" or a "w"!

The big, long Britisher stopped in the channel and just drifted with the current and I grabbed the glasses from Ivan's eyes. I could see a boat jerking down the davits and white sailors in it.

It put off and was rowed rapidly towards our point—that even "eat-'em-up" stroke of navy men.

Then Ivan spied, or thought he did—I never really learnt—spied men in the jungle behind us and he yelled: "Scouty, they're coming! Oh! we're lost."

I changed our plans right there and I told Ivy to kick off his sneakers like I was doing. We raced out into the breakers and I asked: "Ivy, think you can make it, if we swim out to meet them?" And he said gamely: "Yes; with you alongside, Scouty Gaze."

The breakers were long ones, but not high and when they were up to our necks, we shoved off and I told Ivan to turn on his back, if he

tired, and take his time, for the boat was only a couple of hundred yards away.

Then all at once that boat leapt through the water towards us and some one in it started firing. I thought at the enemy ashore. But coming up on a swell, I just had a glimpse of a black triangle, maybe, fifty feet to the right, moving towards us, and those shots shooting up silver jets about it.

I guessed right in that second, and I was worried that Ivan might see that fin and then there would be trouble. But a scout is resourceful, so I yelled in Ivan's ear, "They're welcoming us, old dear. You carry on and we'll be yanked out in half a sec."

I slipped the lanyard of my scout-knife over my head and twisted it about my wrist. It's only a two inch blade, but I felt better with that grasped firmly in my right.

Ivan began to tire and he got frightened. "Help me, Frank. Help!" I ordered him to turn on his back and float and I treaded water nearby. Would that boat ever get nearer! It was coming on like a motor-boat, the oars creaking and falling and some petty officer in the bows was swearing or yelling encouragingly to us.

He had a smoking automatic in his hand and he raised it and seemed to point it directly at me. He would have made a dandy magazine cover with that pose.

Then there was a churning in the water to the right. Ivan gave an awful scream and started to struggle as I grabbed him. I swear a shot whisked between us. A greenish black shape rose and turned. I saw a whitish yellow underbody, that I slashed at earnestly, and got—too. And something gritty and sandpapery scraped my left leg.

Gee! it pained, but I held on to Ivan, who was going under. And, then, there were more shots over my head, and we were jerked into the boat like we were fish on a line, and the whole crew began cheering as though we had won an automobile race or something.

But I was in no humor to enjoy cheers, for my left leg was red as an auction flag, and dyeing the white pants of the petty officer who held me.

And, as usual, I felt faint, but I managed to tell about that hidden landing party and then like a sissy, what happened next did not interest me any more.

The next I remember, I heard guns firing overhead, and they shook me, and, later, long after that, I was opening my eyes in a nice and clean and comfy cot and a doctor fellow and a naval officer with black hair and a reddish mustache that did not match were standing alongside.

It was so nice and comfy to feel yourself between real honest-to-goodness sheets again that

I just half closed my eyes so that the dream would not go away yet. I felt as if I moved and looked about, the white steel-walled cabin and the white uniformed officers would fade out and I would be gazing up at wavy palm tops, and, beyond, to the blue hot sky of our island.

But it was no dream, for Ivan Williams in a middy suit that was too big for him, and a young midshipman, maybe, three inches taller than Ivan, came in. The middy, soon as he saw the officer, became a ramrod and saluted with a snap.

Then, they all saw that I was awake and Ivan said: "Frank Gaze!" and he could not go on.

They all started to talk and I learnt the black and reddish haired naval officer was Captain Rutherford of the *Orion*—that was the British cruiser—and they had shelled that hidden camp and had all on board as prisoners and the midshipman was Ivan's second cousin, whom he had not seen in four years, and—I almost collapsed at this—we were out to sea and steaming as fast as the cruiser's crippled engines would let her.

When I heard that, I exclaimed: "Aren't we going back to the island any more? Why, I left Sis's slip-on on the beach and Cap Bookie's glasses, and where's my scout-knife?"

They all laughed and that doctor chap reached up to the head of my cot and there my

knife was dangling from its lanyard, and a bit of the point was broken off. I hope it's in that old shark to-day!

Then the doctor lifted me up. I saw my left leg was all tight white bandages, but it did not hurt much, just numb, and he carried me across to an open port, and said: "There, take your last sight on your island, my lad."

I looked and it must have been evening, for through the round port, like looking into one of those frames that make postal views stand out naturally—Mousie Moran had one, if he hasn't broken it yet—I saw the blue water and far, far off the sloping jungle sides and the rocky blunt Cobra's Hood glaring fresh in the setting sun.

Cobra Island seemed just as pleasant and inviting as it had been six weeks before from the *Khandala's* lifeboat. And you would never, never imagine that smiling island in the blue glare was something else.

"You shining trap!" I exclaimed, and Doctor Sullivan put me down and carried me back to my cot. And I never saw Cobra Island again.

Gee! something almost made me cry, and I was silent, which isn't natural for me.

But here the captain said kindly, though he looked stern: "My lad, cheer up. You've done the Service a jolly good turn, for if those beggars had escaped, they might have done

considerable damage to shipping in these waters. But heal up, before we make Singapore."

"Singapore!" I cried.

"Right-o! We're headed for that port and we should make it by next Thursday morning."

Here the doctor ordered all away and took something from an orderly and whatever it was, it must have been knock-out drops, for it put me to sleep, real sleep.

CHAPTER XII

I HAVE THAT REST

AND now I come to the last reel of these Adventures of Francis X. Gaze, Jr.—that's my name in full—and this is just one grand reunion after another.

First, the ship barber gave me a hair-cut free, and when next that doctor came and was joking and bandaging my game leg, where that old shark sandpapered it—and he did a good job for one swipe!—who came in but the captain of the *Orion* himself.

He looked serious, like captains of boats and teachers have to, but he wasn't and he told me that he had sent a radio to the American Consul at Singapore.

Then he said kindly: "Frank Gaze, here's your Consul's reply that the operator just picked up."

He must have seen a scared look come into my face, for I had just thought of something. It was that I was going to learn Dad had been lost with the *Khandala*. So he added: "Buck up, my lad. I think you'll find this deuced interesting news." And then he handed me the slip of paper on which was typewritten:

Rutherford, Orion.

Have cabled Gaze's father Bombay. Mother Brooklyn. Will meet Francis.

DALY.

That radio was "heap big medicine" and better than all the bandaging on H.M.S. *Orion*, for hearing from Consul Daly felt almost the same as hearing from Dad.

I had a sneaking feeling—I think you call it tuition—that both Dad and Mother were started already for Singapore. And it was tuition, as you'll see soon.

I grinned and Captain Rutherford and that Doctor Sullivan helped me, when they heard why.

Then Ivan, looking a bit changed for the better, for he had seen the barber too, and that middy cousin of his, Earl Scott-Shaw, called.

The captain sized up things and said good-bye, and I learnt lots. That the *Orion* had been hulled badly and was proceeding half speed to port, and two destroyers, one British and one Japanese, had come up during the night and were standing by, and that we had all the wounded and healthy from the *Von Roon* on board, and about fifty British casualties, and that all the middies and some others wanted the worst way to meet me, for Ivan Williams had been talking too much.

But Doctor Sullivan would not let me out, much less up, though I assured him my leg was

O. K. You might as well try and tell a tom-cat to omit the back yard fence concert at night as to argue with that doctor. You know, that pressed-steel kind of a man.

Then Thursday morning Doctor Sullivan got softening of the heart, or hardening of the nerves, or something, for he brought me a message, and an orderly gave me an armful of naval clothes and a crutch. And when I was dressed like a British midshipman—buttons and all—another orderly appeared and, saluting, said: "Captain wishes you to report on the bridge immediately, sir." He carried me up the companion way and there on the bridge were a group of officers and Ivan and Captain Rutherford.

The *Orion* must have had every flag she possessed hung out, for there were long, long wash-lines of them stretched everywhere aloft, and that shot-up funnel had been removed and I saw the two destroyers steaming ahead—only there were four now.

Ivan whispered, like he does when he is excited: "That's Singapore ahead, Scouty, and my cousin says there'll be a bally reception."

Then Captain Rutherford came up and made me sit on a camp-stool and rest my hospital leg on another. He lent me his glasses and, say! they were better than Cap Bookie's, or anybody's. I'll bet you could see ants on the moon with them.

The noise began. Singapore must have heard of the fight with the *Von Roon* all right, for whistles and sirens and flag-dipping and shouts and handkerchiefs and brown arm wavings started. In the midst of the racket sailed the *Orion* slowly and proudly, like a victor should, and I forgot my old leg and stood up to see better.

It was some real celebration, all right, but as I told Ivan Williams: "Shucks! if this was an American cruiser, and she had cleaned up a Fritzie and was returning to New York Harbor! Why, from Coney Island to Grant's Tomb—"

Then a Government launch came alongside and I was shaking hands with Mr. Daly. He told me that Dad was wasting a lot of money cabling him, and he had already caught the *Nagoya* at Colombo and was due at Singapore in three days!

I was to see Dad, my Dad again within three days! I started dancing at this news, only my wounded leg objected violently and I had to sit down. It's no time to have a limb in bandages when you feel good. It's just a blamed nuisance, like measles in vacation.

It was just as well I did—I mean sit down—for the Consul produced a slip of pinkish paper and handed it over casually, saying: "Frank, this came this morning for you."

"For me!" I exclaimed, and read it. It said—I have it safe yet:

New York.

Francis Gaze,
c/o American Consul,
Singapore.

My darling son. God is good. Come home.

MOTHER.

I did not care much more for the Singapore celebration, for my eyes grew misty. Any boy's would, receiving that from the right side of the world.

But what did Ma want to go and waste money cabling me the two words, "Come Home?" Where did she think I was going, anyway?

Then the Consul took charge of me like my name was Daly, and I thanked everybody, and, though I objected, a sailor carried me down like an invalid and laid me in that launch. It was only when we chug-chugged away from the stage that I remembered I had not seen Ivan Williams for an hour. Mr. Daly said he reckoned Ivan was not blue, as his folks were at Hong Kong, and they had been cabling the Governor every day since the news of his rescue came. The Governor, Lord Harry Somebody or Other, had taken personal charge of him and we'd call at Government House Saturday.

So I went ashore at the P. & O. Docks and

met Mrs. Daly—she was young and mothered me a bit, you know.

Then we drove to the Consul's bungalow on Neil Road, where it was cool and there was a fat, chunky-looking Chinese tailor in a blue pajama suit, who had been waiting hours to take my measurements.

I composed my cable to Mother and when it was done it read:

Dad coming Sunday. Fully rested. Lots love.

FRANK GAZE.

I showed it to the Consul at dinner and I asked him politely what did a cable cost a word from Singapore to Brooklyn. And he said: "Glad you reminded me. Your Dad cabled me to put this in your pocket, but don't leave it there."

And with that he handed me about half a pound of silver coins. I like Consul Daly.

Then I had to answer about a million million questions till bedtime.

Next morning Mrs. Daly called me early, as I had made her promise, and we drove to the Foreign Mission Church and went to Mass and I received Holy Communion, for I did not want to appear ungrateful to Our dear Lord, who—like He always does—had brought me safely through everything.

That day I felt better than ever. But Mrs. Daly made me lie about and look over Ameri-

can papers and magazines and catch up on all the baseball dope I had missed. It was good to see Brooklyn and the Giants and the Yankees had started the season with a rush. I also looked at the new war pictures and when I finished one tin of chocolates, Mrs. Daly brought me another. Now, she's what I call a hostess.

Then that serious Chinese tailor—his name on his card, which he gave me, was "U. Tack"—only he did not see anything funny in that—brought me suits and things and I was dressed in stuff I owned again, and not in duds that advertised the British Navy.

Saturday, Consul and Mrs. Daly and I had dinner at Government House, where they had a caged tiger in the garden that's a beaut. I met the Governor of the Colony, and Ivan Williams again. And a whole slough of folks in uniforms and in whites. All they did was to ask questions and made me blush. It gets tiresome after a while. I mean both.

Then came Sunday and Dad's boat was due at ten. It seemed forty-eight hours from after Mass till time to start for the P. & O. Docks.

When we got out of the gharri, there was the *Nagoya* creeping up and creeping up, like it was afraid ever to get near that wharf, but, finally, it did. And, believe me, I staged the swellest little reunion right there with the first male passenger down that gangplank.

Some one must have told the crowd, about

Dad and me, 'cause they cheered like at a football game, and a large lady in blue and earrings, whom I never saw before nor since that Sunday morning, flung her two arms about me, and—O fish! When will some women ever get sense!

That was a Farewell Sunday, for I learnt Dad had engaged passage for both of us on the *Nagoya*.

For as he said: "Son, there's a lady and her daughter in America, who have been cabling me not to come home without you and to come at once with you. And we're going chop-chop, savvy, sonny?"

So after a load of good-byes and Mrs. and Consul Daly giving me tins of chocolates—almost enough to make me sick—and Ivan coming on board in Dad's care, we sailed next morning.

We had to pass close to the *Orion* and there was cheering for me and they dipped their flag and the *Nagoya* answered too.

But the nicest thing was, when a little later the steward came up to where Dad and I sat in deck chairs, waiting for the tiffin gong, and said: "For you, Master." And handed me a radio. It read:

Bon voyage to Scouty from all his friends on
H.M.S. *Orion*

RUTHERFURD.
Captain.

Now that was thoughtful, and Ivan had received one too. That Captain Rutherford was a nice man, but, then all sailors are that way. It must be living on the broad ocean that keeps them from being narrow.

Those five days, sailing up the South China Sea, I told Dad everything I've been telling you, and a few more things too—and I healed up and by the time we made Hong Kong, I did not need a cane. Just a little limp, like I had gotten one good in football.

I attended Ivan's Old Home Week Celebration. His parents had Dad and me to their bungalow up the side of the Peak. That was a dinner I'll never forget and at the close Mr. Williams said some crazy things and ended up by presenting me with a gold wrist watch, on which was engraved, "From the ever grateful parents of Ivan Williams." It was a good thing they did that, for my old "Radiolite" was suffering from too much sea-wateritis. I left it with Ivan as a souvenir.

But we had to sail for Shanghai next morning, and Ivan and Company waved us off. He promised to write, but he hasn't done it yet, and I can't write him as I forgot to ask him for his address.

It was lonesome without Ivy, for we had become tremendous friends. You know how it is when you have been through the same scraps with a fellow.

But I had Dad, and sitting out on deck, he told me all about his adventures after the sinking of the *Khandala*. How the lifeboat he was in was picked up at daylight by a destroyer and they were landed at Penang, and all the long wait for news of me and the sad letters he had to send to Sheepshead Bay. Then, business is business, and he was General Manager of the Cosmos Film Corporation, and, how sorrowful it was all those weeks till Consul Daly's cable struck him all in a heap. It must have, and I looked at Dad's grayer hair and I knew then why he looked older.

But Dad and I became more chummier than we ever had been. We did Shanghai and Kobe and Yokohama together. We had no real adventures much to speak of and I did not fast at the hotels, 'cause Dad said I needed to be fattened up a bit, and I could not make any sensible objection to that, could I?

All the time though, the longing to meet Mother was like a rope pulling, and we cabled her to Brooklyn from each port. At least, I thought Dad said he did, and I did not write, for no letter was headed for God's Country any quicker than Dad and I were.

Then we changed to the *Siberia Maru* at Yokohama and four weeks after leaving Singapore I came on deck early—it was July 18th—and there were the high volcanic cliffs of

Hawaii and I could see Pearl Harbor and three U. S. "subs" cruising off that naval base, and, beyond, Honolulu and grim Diamond Head.

Best of all, boats were flying the good old Stars and Stripes. You bet I saluted my flag after seeing so many foreign ones on ships and flagstaffs.

I thought Dad was too fussy in making me get a new hair-cut, when I really did not need it, and telling me to wear a brand new suit—all white knickerbockers and coat and a gorgeous green tie I had bought myself in Kobe. But he never told me why.

And, then, finally, the Quarantine doctors came and examined all the passengers, to see if we were bringing leprosy or other nice diseases into U. S. territory. But they were disappointed in me that time, and soon we sailed between the cut in the coral reef. You could see right through the glassy water down where the slice had been dredged out. And the rich brown Kanaka boys, who swim better than most fishes, came splashing out and they dove for coins.

When we were wharfing into the dock, Dad went below and I stayed topside to watch. You know how it is; folks peering up and passengers yelling silly things down and I was busy taking all this in, when Dad came up behind me and said: "Sonny, we'd better be

among the first ashore. For we want to get down to Waikiki and that surf."

And I believed that one-piece yarn!

Dad had my panama in his hand and gave it to me and we sailed down the gangplank and landed on good old U. S. A. Yankee American land again.

Next second—Gee whiz!—I thought a bale of something had been dropped on me, from the upper story of the dock and new reels of adventures were starting.

My panama went sailing and I was being crushed and cried over and darlined by Mother!

Dad and Sis were locked in each other's arms.

Why, those two should have been in Brooklyn, five thousand miles away, and Dad had never let on to me!

No wonder some children turn out bad. That's all I'll say.

Then when Mother was only about half through, Sis, who usually corrects me like sisters think they have to, started in. I don't mean to correct me. And my new suit was a wreck, but she was happy.

In the taxi to the Aloha House at Waikiki, Sis told how the first cable had come in the afternoon from Consul Daly, and she and Mother had gone straight to the bank, just as it was closing and drawn out a handbag full of banknotes—every cent Dad had to his credit

and his credit is good too—and they had left Pennsy Station for San Francisco 9 P. M., that night. And Mother would have been on the dock at Singapore or the beach of Cobra Island, only they could not make boat connections that far, and, anyway, here they were “and etc.”

Well, Dad and I did not get that swim in Waikiki surf till next morning, 'cause there was too much talking going on in the Gaze Family Reunion.

Sis claimed I was two inches taller and ten shades darker and really handsomer. The hotel scales, which is straight and no jollier, said I weighed seven pounds more than I did leaving Sheepshead Bay, but in spite of all that, Mother decided I needed a rest and I was to get it, personally conducted by her, right here at Waikiki Beach.

I guess Dad and Mother and Sis needed the rest, after all their excitement, not me.

So here I've been for the past month. I could not loaf like Ma and Sis do all day in veranda chairs and talk, so I've learnt surf board riding from some dandy Honolulu scouts and now I can play an ukalele like a native. Dad says, much better than some.

In the mornings after my first swims, by Dad's orders I have been dictating this yarn to Sis and she has been taking it down in shorthand and typing it.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with me personally—'cept that chip out of the blade of my scout-knife, and that only makes it more historical—but I don't think my panama fits me any more. And I'll tell you the reason.

You remember a fellow named Mr. Enoch Arden, who was shipwrecked and was thought to have died, but he came back years later and found some family changes had taken place? Dad's Company filmed that story once and I saw it, so I know all about that man.

Well, lately I've been feeling like Mr. Arden might have, if things had turned out differently with him. For Mother has let the cat out of the bag and shown me some—not all yet—some of the newspaper clippings and the letters that came about me when folks thought I was in Purgatory.

Gee! I never knew I was that scouty and saintly as those letters said, and wait till I lay hands on Mousie Moran for his letter of condolence to my Mother about me!

And the prayers offered for me! No wonder nothing happened to me. Why, Mother had me enrolled as a Perpetual Dead Member in half the Purgatorial Associations in America, and there was some scheme to erect a Memorial Altar in memory of me in the Boys' Chapel at the Prep, only they did not start it till Dad got back. It's not going to be built now.

"The Prep Annual" came on the last mail

and it has my picture in scout uniform and a swell write-up. Sis says Mr. Gilbreth, my teacher, must have made it up, but I know better, 'cause he's going to be a priest and not allowed to tell a lie, for it says I was "by far the leader of my class" and how I was one of "the war's innocent victims" and "lay awaiting the last summons beneath the distant blue waves of the Indian Ocean." "And etc."

Gosh! it was so sad and unlike me that I almost blubbered, but I know now where Mousie Moran got most of his crazy sentences for that letter of condolence.

But, alas! we sail for San Francisco next Tuesday, 'cause Mother has it all figured out, if we take that boat, we can cross the continent in time for the opening of the Prep in September!

Mother would prefer to have me lose out on this rest, and, maybe, ruin some part of my health, as I told her, than have me lose a single day of school.

Dad promises after the war we will come back to Cobra Island. Mother says if I go, she's going along, but Sis says she isn't—and Dad intends to examine those gems. For he says that very likely some ancient rajah has his safety deposit vault under that idol and there ought to be more buried underneath. Well, first, I am going to drop dynamite on every crocodile guard in that moat. But that's

for the future. Just at present Dad is calling to know if I have my suit on. And you know how I hate the surf of Waikiki Beach! Yeh, just like I hate nut sundaes and hot dogs and baby monkeys!

So, please excuse me, and I'm very sorry that I was not able to tell you about Bombay and India, for, the truth is, I was distracted on the way out. I leave it to you now, wasn't I? Honest?

THE END

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